

**Values and Beliefs Held about Parenting and Education
by School Staff and Parents of Pupils with Special
Educational Needs in the Context of Home-School
Collaboration**

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Student Declaration

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Declaration

I declare that while registered as a research degree student at UEL, I have not been a registered or enrolled student for another award of this university or of any other academic or professional institution.

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

I declare that my research required ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee (UREC) and confirmation of approval is embedded within the thesis.

Maria Ionides

Signature:

Date: 15/04/2016

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Abstract

Effective collaboration between school staff and parents of children identified as having special educational needs is considered to be an essential component of the child's successful education. Differences in beliefs and perspectives adopted by the school staff and parents play an important role in the process of collaboration. However, little is known about the precise relationship between the beliefs and the process of collaboration.

The purpose of this study was to explore the values and beliefs held by the school staff and parents in the areas of parenting and education. The study also explored the link between these beliefs and the process of collaboration within four parent-teacher dyads from mainstream primary schools.

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews based on repertory grid technique were used. The findings highlighted an overall similarity in the participants' views on collaboration and in their important beliefs about parenting and education. At the same time, differences in perspectives adopted by parents and teachers were also identified.

The author discusses how these differences in perspectives are manifested in the process of collaboration from the point of Cultural Capital Theory. The factors such as power differentials, trust between parents and teachers, and limited resources and constraints of educational system are highlighted. Implication for practice for teachers and educational psychologists are discussed.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the research project and to describe the legislative and historical context of the study both nationally and locally from the point of view of the East Anglian Local Authority (LA) that supported the research. It includes discussion and definitions of the main psychological terms of the study: *home-school collaboration* and *values and beliefs*. The researcher's position and origins of the researcher's interest in the area are clarified and the purpose of the research in broad terms is presented.

1.2. Historical and legislative context

Home-school collaboration has attracted a large amount of research, particularly in Europe and the USA, over the last several decades. The research into home-school relationships has been closely linked with the legislative and philosophical developments in the field. In particular, during the 1980s in the UK there was a shift from the research into *parental engagement*, where parents were seen as passive supporters of educators who drove the educational process, to the research into *home-school partnerships*, where parents were seen as active partners that have (or are supposed to have) an equal power in directing the educational process for their children (see Vickers & Minke, 1995 for historical overview). The philosophical position of the researchers started to shift towards a more social-constructionist perspective on home-school relationships where social power differentials, differences in resources and constructions of the reality between home and school were given a central place (Cole, 2007).

This shift in research went hand-in-hand with the changes happening in legislation around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision in schools. In the UK, the Warnock Report (Department for Education and Science, 1978) for the first time highlighted the need to review the role of

parents in education in order to give parental voices more power in SEND policies and practices. To this day the parental voice continues to be emphasised and reinforced within the legislation. In the UK it has been reiterated in SEND Codes of Practice (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1994; Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2001). The new SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education (DfE) & Department of Health (DoH), 2014) further emphasised parental power in the decision-making process around support for their children with SEND. The Code of Practice says that the schools should listen to parental opinion at all stages of providing support for their children with identified or suspected SEND, including assessment, target setting, agreeing actions, and reviewing the progress (pp. 100-102).

However, researchers repeatedly highlight that there seems to be a persistent gap in the amount of power that parents are *supposed* to have according to legislation and the amount of power they *actually* end up having in SEND provision in schools. This has been explained by a number of factors, including the lack of resources both in families and in schools (Sandberg & Ottosson, 2010), the differences in beliefs and priorities between parents and school staff and the rigidity of the educational system (Cole, 2007), lack of communication skills in school staff (Summers et al., 2005), and the “monitoring role” held by the professionals working with the children (Rothe, Urban, & Werning, 2014; Lasky, 2000). Moreover, some researchers argue that parent-school partnership, as any other partnership, can never be equal and it is important to acknowledge unavoidable differences in power and perspectives (Todd & Higgins, 1998). This gap between the theory and the reality of home-school collaboration stimulates on-going research in the area that strives to identify new ways of improving the collaboration between parents and school.

Outside of the field of SEND, in the 1990s the New Labour Government introduced a strong political agenda for parental involvement in all areas of child development. A number of major government papers (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2007) set expectations for professionals to collaborate with parents who are ready to “engage” and to provide intensive support for those who are not. As a side effect of this agenda a political and professional narrative has been formed, whereby parents who do not collaborate with the professionals are seen as

“hard-to-engage” (Sime & Sheridan, 2014). Many researchers argue that this is a deficit-based narrative that implicitly suggests superiority of the professionals over parents. This, as well as other deficit-based narratives (e.g. “parents in denial”, Lalvani, 2014) is given considerable attention in the literature on collaboration with parents of children with SEND and is seen as a barrier to effective collaboration (Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Cole, 2007; Lalvani, 2014).

1.3. The Local Authority (LA) and school context

The LA that supported this piece of research was in the process of implementing the recent SEND reforms (DfE & DoH, 2014). The increased emphasis on collaboration with parents put pressure on the schools within the LA to re-think the way they work with parents of children with SEND and identify ways of improving their practice. Conversations with school staff suggested that while trying hard to respond to the new legislation, they felt frustrated that some parents did not seem to want to, or were not able to, get involved on one hand, or had unrealistic expectations on the other. Help with mediating difficult relationships with parents was a frequent part of the local schools’ requests for support from the Educational Psychology Service and the present research had a high response rate from the local schools expressing their interest in participation and feedback on the findings.

Initial conversations about the present research have also stimulated considerable interest within the LA Parent Partnership Service indicating that this topic is highly relevant at least to some of the parents of children with SEND as well as to the LA employees who support these parents. This is in line with the research indicating that parents highly value effective collaboration with schools and that there are on-going issues with achieving it (Dinnebeil, Hale & Rule, 1996; Todd & Higgins, 1998).

1.4. Author’s perspective

The inspiration for this research project originated from my professional and personal interest in diversity in parenting and the educational values held by the parents, as well as the differences in values held by parents and professionals. In my previous job as a Family Worker I provided intensive support for “at-risk” families in order to improve outcomes for their young children. While working with a wide range of families, I realised that not all of them shared the professionals’ views on *the best way* of achieving good outcomes for their children or even on what a “*good outcome*” was. At the same time, the Family Workers were expected to act on the basis that they knew better than some parents the correct way of supporting children’s development. The “correct” way was also promoted through the literature targeted at parents and designed by LA-based professionals with reference to research. The families who did not act in line with professionals’ recommendations were inevitably described as “difficult” or “hard-to engage”. Later on in my work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I noticed that school staff also tend to hold strong opinions on what is right and wrong in how parents support their children.

I was taken aback by these deficit-focussed narratives about parents as they discouraged the professionals from understanding diverse parental priorities and values. As an immigrant-parent myself, I was aware that “normal parenting” is constructed very differently in different cultures and within each culture it is supported by very powerful “common-sense” narratives. I noticed that in the UK-based professional environment this concept is also supported by the powerful narrative of “good evidence-base”, as well as by child protection considerations. My personal experience has taught me that the power of these narratives is such that any questioning about natural differences in values and perspectives between professionals and parents is discouraged.

Thus, I was interested to find out what are the parenting and educational beliefs held by parents and professionals. I felt that large differences in beliefs might lead to difficulties in collaboration and by highlighting this link I was hoping to help the participants to move away from the deficit-based narratives used to describe difficulties in collaboration. As a researcher I view parent-school relationships as a partnership: a two-way process where both parties are active and have skills, knowledge and resources to offer. I align myself with the researchers who see these relationships as embedded in a system of power

hierarchies supported by discourses about “normality” (Sime & Sheridan, 2014). I agree with Todd and Higgins (1998) who write that “the partnership between parents and professionals involved in the education of the parents' child or children can never be an equal one. (...) A discourse of equality in a partnership obscures such power relations by talking as if they do not exist” (p. 228). The implications of adopting this perspective for the epistemology and ontology of the research will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.5. Definitions of terms

1.5.1. Home-school collaboration

Definition

There does not appear to be a commonly agreed definition of home-school collaboration. Moreover, the term is not always clearly defined in the research and is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as: home-school partnership; cooperation; relationships; parental involvement; engagement; or participation. The term “home school collaboration” was adopted for the purposes of this research for several reasons. Firstly, it implies a *two-way* process of working together as opposed to, for example, parental engagement or involvement that implies a one-way process whereby parents are engaged in the school-driven process of education. Secondly, the concepts of collaboration, cooperation and partnership all imply an “act of working with someone to produce something” (Stevenson & Pearsall, 2010) which seemed particularly relevant to the context of supporting students with SEND where joint working is deemed to be important. Finally, the term collaboration seemed to be sufficiently neutral and easily understood by the prospective research participants which made it suitable for the purposes of the research. However, during the literature review all of the above terms were considered.

Descriptions of collaboration, cooperation and home-school partnerships both provided by researchers and derived from parental and professional surveys

follow similar lines and highlight several defining features of this process. Thus, collaboration is often described as a process of joint working between the school and the parents where:

1. A shared purpose or an agreed set of goals is present (Cole, 2007; Dobbins & Abbott 2010; Adams & Christenson, 2000).
2. It is a high quality mutually valued relationship where all parties develop a sense of respect, trust and willingness to negotiate (Cole, 2007; Dobbins & Abbott 2010; Dinnebeil et al., 1996).
3. There is a power balance within this relationship where parents can influence the school experience of the child (e.g. Sandberg & Ottosson, 2010), and information, responsibility and skills are shared between all parties (Cole, 2007; Lalvani, 2014; Dinnebeil et al., 1996).

In the present research it was decided to use a participant-driven definition of collaboration (see section 3.5.1 for discussion). The comparison of the above description with the descriptions of collaboration given by the participants will be discussed in section 5.3.1.

Collaboration and educational outcomes

The research in the area of home-school collaboration is often based on a well-supported assumption that effective home-school collaboration is linked with good educational and wider outcomes for students with SEND (see Moorman Kim, Sheridan, Kwon & Koziol, 2013 for an overview). However, due to the considerable complexity of the area and correlational nature of the quantitative research, one should be cautious when transferring these research findings into practice. Thus, some researchers seem to presume a causal relationship, whereby improving parental involvement leads to improvements in the outcomes. These authors use the language of “effectiveness” or “benefits” of parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Other researchers warn that it is not right to assume that all families want to be involved in education or even understand involvement and outcomes in the same way as educators or

researchers themselves (Cole, 2007; Todd & Higgins, 1998). These authors highlight the flaws of the one-directional view of parental involvement that is commonly adopted by the researchers investigating the link between involvement and outcomes.

Variations in home-school collaboration

A number of research studies looked into variation of parental involvement in education across social classes, cultures and other demographic parameters. While there are some inconsistencies in the findings, particularly around the link between ethnicity and parental involvement, overall research (see Barlow & Humphrey, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011 for overviews) seems to suggest that parental involvement tends to be:

- higher when students are identified as having SEND;
- higher for high-achieving students;
- lower for families that come from a different culture or who speak English as a second language;
- lower for families of low socio-economic status and / or experiencing other common stress factors (for example, parental mental health problems and single parent families);
- lower for parents of secondary school students.

The factors that researchers identified as underpinning these variations in collaboration will be discussed in more detail in sections 2.3 and 2.4. These factors include differences in values and beliefs which will be defined and discussed in the next section.

1.5.2. Values and beliefs in the context of collaboration

Definition

Values as a psychological concept has been applied in numerous areas of psychology and education. Authors point out that it has been defined differently in each research area and sometimes by each author, following a number of social and cognitive psychology theories (Horley, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

In the context of home-school collaboration parent and teacher-held values and beliefs are frequently mentioned; however, with a few exceptions researchers do not define either of these concepts, thus perhaps demonstrating the extent to which they have entered the common language of the field. To complicate matters, concepts of values and beliefs are frequently used interchangeably with other terms such as attitudes or simply views, perspectives and expectations (Hauser-Cram, Sirin & Stipek, 2003; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Unlike other studies in the area, the present research project utilised Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) methodology to investigate participants' values and beliefs (see section 3.5.2). While PCP primarily focusses on "personal constructs" (Kelly, 1991), some authors argue that it also could provide a framework for understanding values and beliefs. Thus, Horley (1991) argues that even though values and beliefs are not widely mentioned in the PCP literature, they seem to bear a similar meaning to personal constructs as they were originally described by Kelly (1991) and could be used interchangeably. This perspective was adopted as a basis for understanding "values" and "beliefs" within the context of the present research.

Within PCP (see Kelly, 1991; Fransella, 2005 for overview) the concept of personal constructs was developed to help understand how an individual conceptualises the world and how these conceptualisations influence social behaviour and interpersonal relationships. Thus, Kelly viewed people as scientists who, through their interactions with the environment, create and test hypotheses. Gradually, on the basis of these "experiments" people create personal constructs, a set of relatively stable mental representations, in relation to a particular context or experience. Kelly thought that the formation of constructs is an individual cognitive process. At the same time he recognised that constructs can also be based on ideas shared by a group of people. Personal constructs were seen as dialectic in their nature: people automatically

allocate a positive or a negative judgement to the events, thus making their constructs bipolar, where both polarities reflect different aspects of personal experiences. For example, one can describe their experience of shopping as “therapeutic”, as opposed to “stressful”. Kelly also believed that constructs are hierarchically organised, where constructs that are highly important for an individual are seen as *core* (or higher-order), while less important constructs are *peripheral* (or lower-order). Horley (1991) argues that this is similar to the hierarchical relationship between one’s values and beliefs systems, where values tend to have greater importance for an individual.

In line with Horley’s interpretation of values and beliefs in the context of PCP, this research viewed these two concepts as representing core and peripheral personal constructs respectively. More specifically, in this research *values* (i.e. core constructs) were understood as constructs of the highest personal importance that had the strongest impact on the interpersonal behaviour. At the same time *beliefs* (i.e. lower order constructs) were seen as more context-specific and flexible constructs that had less impact on day-to-day interpersonal behaviour.

Interestingly, not all researchers who applied PCP methodology to investigate values followed PCP theory in their definition of this concept. Thus, in their research into secondary teachers’ personal and professional values Sunley and Locke (2012) used the definition of “values” developed by an influential social psychologist Milton Rokeach. In his work Rokeach (1973) described values as a “set of standards that guide human behaviour while supporting a person’s self-esteem by producing a sense of achievement of the moral standards created by a specific society or an institution” (p. 49). Similarly to Kelly, Rokeach put a strong emphasis on the link between values and actions; however, he clearly viewed values as being essentially socially-constructed as opposed to developed through individual cognitive processes. While being different, these two definitions complement rather than contradict each other. Together they gave a basis for the understanding of the concepts of “values” and “beliefs” that was used in the present research. Thus, in this research values and beliefs are understood as follows.

- They form a relatively stable but not rigidly fixed system of personal views and moral references.
- They guide people's behaviour and interpersonal relationships in a particular context.
- Every value and belief has a positive and a negative polarity.
- They can form a hierarchy where lower-order ideas can be referred to as beliefs while higher order ideas can be referred to as values.
- They are constructed both through individual cognitive processes and through social discourses.

The creation of a fully developed definition of these concepts could become a research project in its own right. The above represents only a working definition that was developed to guide the design of the research and the analysis of the data.

1.6. The rationale and the purpose of the research

As discussed in section 1.4, the interest behind this research was fuelled by an informal hypothesis that differences in, as well as lack of understanding of, belief systems makes collaboration more difficult between teachers and parents. Thus, if both the school staff and the parents were to develop richer descriptions and better understanding of each other's values and beliefs this could stimulate a more fruitful and enjoyable process of collaboration.

Subsequently, as this broad interest had to be narrowed down to a manageable research project, an idea of exploring participants' values and beliefs systems emerged. It was hoped that *exploration of these values and beliefs as well as of their place in the process of collaboration* would constitute a meaningful contribution to this area of research, as well as give the participants an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and the process of collaboration. This formed the purpose of this explorative piece of research.

Indeed, other researchers argue that parents highly appreciate when the school staff show understanding and respect their perspectives (Hess, Molina and Kozelski, 2006,) while teachers find it easier to work with parents who hold similar beliefs on key issues (Vickers & Minke, 1995). However, the link between collaboration and beliefs was never researched in much detail. This, as well as other aspects of research in this area will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Overview of the chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to set the project into the context of other research in the area of values or beliefs and home-school collaboration. The information for this chapter was obtained from 53 published research and opinion articles identified through systematic and snowball searches of several databases.

The first section of the chapter describes in detail the procedure of the systematic search. The second section provides a general discussion of the research identified through a systematic search, with a particular focus on a number of theories that have been used to explain the link between collaboration and beliefs. The third section focuses in detail on 11 research papers that were identified as the most relevant for the topic of the present research project. Finally, the chapter ends with a section outlining the main gaps in the research in the area and making the links to the present research project.

2.2. Systematic search procedure

A systematic review of available published literature was carried out in four stages. Stage one involved a search of several electronic databases using search terms identified through previous reading as well as a Psych Info database thesaurus search. The results of this stage are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Stage one: search terms, filters and databases

Search terms	Search filters	Databases searched	Number of articles returned (without duplicates)
<p>value OR belief OR attitude OR perspective OR (world view) OR (personal construct)</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>parenting OR childrearing OR education OR school*</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>family OR parents OR home</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>school OR teacher</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>Special need</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>collaboration OR cooperation OR partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language • Articles • Peer reviewed journals 	<p>EBSCO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Abstracts; • Educational Research Complete; • Psych Articles; • Psych Info. <p>Scopus</p>	<p>104</p> <p>47</p>
Total number of articles extracted			151

Stage two of the systematic review involved the application of five exclusion criteria to the 151 articles extracted at the previous stage (on the basis of the information in the abstract). The remaining articles were read and through a

snowball search of the literature reviews further relevant studies were identified. The results of this stage are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Stage two: exclusion criteria.

	Exclusion criteria	Number of articles discarded
The original number of articles		151
Exclusion criteria 1	Research is not relevant to any of the search terms	-36
Exclusion criteria 2	Research only briefly mentions teacher/parent beliefs or collaboration, but does not focus on these terms.	-39
Exclusion criteria 3	Research contains views about a service or event (as opposed to beliefs)	-21
Exclusion criteria 4	Duplicates between EBSCO and Scopus databases	-16
Exclusion criteria 5	The article could not be retrieved	-10
Number of articles added through snowball search		+24
Total number of articles selected for the second round of analysis		53

Stage three involved a detailed analysis of the 53 articles accepted for the literature review. This analysis served two purposes: firstly, to create a rounded and detailed understanding of research in the field of beliefs and home-school collaboration; secondly, to identify articles that are the most relevant to the present research. Initially, articles that mentioned all of the key terms or their synonyms (collaboration, beliefs, SEND) were accepted as highly relevant. From the initial 53 articles five articles fitted this criterion.

However, none of these five articles had beliefs as the *main* focus of the study. Instead the researchers tended to focus on collaboration and mentioned participants' beliefs only as a relatively small aspect of experiences of collaboration. Beliefs were either touched on amongst the results, or were not related to parenting and education. This highlighted the lack of research on parenting and educational beliefs conducted in the context of collaboration and SEND, which is surprising given the strong theoretical rhetoric about the links between these two concepts (Cole, 2007; Palawat & May 2012; Harry, 2008).

In order to gather richer information on research into parenting and educational beliefs, it was decided to accept as highly relevant six further articles that had a stronger focus on beliefs and values. None of these studies were conducted in the context of SEND, and not all of them had a strong focus on collaboration. Thus, as a result of stage three of the systematic search, 11 articles were

selected for detailed critical review, the results of which are described in section 2.4.

The next section provides a broad overview of the research and theories represented in the 53 articles accepted at the end of the second stage. It is hoped that this material can help to create a rounded understanding of the area by covering a number of perspectives adopted by the researchers in the field. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that in reality this review only scratches the surface of a very large field of research. Inevitably it does not cover every piece of research or every theory that exists in the area of beliefs and collaboration between teachers and parents.

2.3. Beliefs in the context of home-school collaboration

Opinion-based articles tend to agree that values and beliefs play a certain role in home-school relationships, particularly when a student is identified as having SEND (Cole, 2007; Harry, 2008; Lalvani, 2014). There is some empirical evidence to support this view. Researchers identified that beliefs can directly affect the way parents interact with schools (Moorman Kim et al., 2013; Green, Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007), and also the way in which teachers respond to students (Hauser-Cram et al. 2003; Knotek & Steve, 2003) and parents (Lasky, 2000; Elbers & de Haan, 2014).

The importance of considering parental values is particularly highlighted in situations where there seems to be a difference between beliefs held by parents and professionals. Thus, it has been pointed out that parents from other cultures might differ from the professionals in their beliefs about age-related expectations; parental role and SEND labels (Harry, 2008; Hess et al., 2006; Muscott, 2002; Palawat & May, 2012).

Overall research into cultural differences and collaboration tends to focus on the differences in *expectations about collaboration* and *communication styles* of parents and professionals rather on than the actual beliefs held by the two parties. For example, Muscott (2002) argues that differences in non-verbal communication such as the use of smiles, silences and personal space could

impact on the process of collaboration. Harry (2008) overviews a large body of American research into collaboration with immigrant parents and parents from ethnic minority backgrounds. He highlights that these parents tend to hold different attitudes towards special education seeing it as a privilege for their child rather than a right. They also tend to treat schools as having very high authority in their child's education. Harry points out that despite these differences parental views on what constitutes good collaboration do not seem to be culture-dependant and are based simply on "common sense and ordinary human decency" (p. 375).

Harry also argues that professionals tend to make "thoughtless generalizations" on the basis of class and ethnicity that could create significant difficulties in collaboration and contribute to the issue of over-presentation of children from ethnic minority backgrounds in special education.

Harry's comments are echoed in the findings of the UK-based research into engagement of parents from Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin into their child's mainstream education (Crozier & Davies, 2007). The authors point out the widespread lack of culture-appropriate means of communicating the invitation for parental engagement whereby "one size fits all" approach is used.

Consequently, parents from both ethnic groups in the study seemed to be not aware of the school's expectations for their engagement or felt that the opportunities provided did not fit in with their way of living.

The authors suggest that in the process of acculturation to the local culture parents tended to change their behaviour towards school. Parents who were recent immigrants tended to trust the school to be the best way of ensuring good future for their child (thus respecting it and seeing it as a privilege as described by Harry (2002)). Parents who were not the first generation to live in the UK were closer to what the authors described as white middle class values and were more likely to "push" for their child's education at home and in school as well as be more actively involved with the school affairs.

Inter-class differences in educational beliefs and, in particular, the white middle class tendency to put much greater value on additional educational opportunities was highlighted by a number of researchers (Gillies, 2006; Hanafin & Lynch, 2002; Lareau, 2015). However, it has also been argued that

these differences are linked to specific family experiences rather than their social class status (Irwin & Elley, 2011).

To summarise, while a number of researchers highlight the differences in beliefs between cultures and social classes, there is not any agreement on the nature or the extent of these differences. Some authors specifically warn against making generalisations about groups of people and suggest that it is more useful to focus on individual experiences and circumstances. Moreover, research highlights that some of the educational values, such as importance of academic progress and achievement, spread across all cultural and social class boundaries (Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Green et al., 2007). With this in mind, it was decided to include in this literature review articles from a relatively wide range of Western European cultures: USA, UK, Canada, Ireland and Germany. It was thought that any differences in beliefs and collaboration that might come up as a result of the literature review would be more likely to be related to the individual circumstances of the research participants rather than the home culture where the research was carried out.

Additionally, some researchers point out that differences in beliefs, particularly in the context of SEND, are inherent in the way parents and teachers are positioned within the system (Todd & Higgins, 1998; Cole, 2007; Lasky, 2000). As one parent said in the study by Todd and Higgins “I want what’s right for him exclusively. They want what’s right for him in a context” (p. 229). This issue shows itself in disagreements between parents and teachers about children’s diagnosis (as well as the need to have one); inclusive education; and the level of support needed (Trainor, 2010; Hess et al., 2006; Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Monsen, 2004).

Research in this area seems to be disproportionately focussed on parental beliefs, while little is written about variation in beliefs and values amongst teachers and its links with collaboration with parents. An exception to that is a study by Lasky (2000) into the influence that the school culture and professional values of teachers have on their emotional experiences of interactions with parents. Lasky suggests that teachers’ beliefs about parents could be influenced by the teachers’ own school experiences; images of schools in popular media; educational policies; and social discourses of “teacher as an

expert". Despite the apparent lack of research, the need for teachers to reflect on and potentially change their beliefs is often highlighted (e.g. Harry, 2008; Frederickson et al., 2004; Murray, Handyside, Straka, & Arton-Titus, 2013).

Values and beliefs mentioned in research are not often described as belonging specifically to the domains of parenting or education. More often, researchers focus on a narrower topic in the participant's beliefs system (e.g. "parent role construction" in Moorman Kim et al. (2013), or "beliefs about stimulation of learning" in Arndt, Rothe, Urban & Werning (2013)). This issue will be discussed in detail in section 2.4.1.

The main theoretical distinction between researchers in this area comes from the way authors position themselves on what Lalvani (2014) describes as a *continuum of power*. On one end of this continuum there are studies that explicitly or implicitly view parents as passive participants of one-way relationships with school where they support the educators' efforts. In this type of research the power differentials between parents and schools are not discussed and other components of collaboration are given greater attention (e.g. Green et al, 2007). On the other end of this spectrum are studies in which parents are seen as pro-active decision makers in their interactions with the school (Trainor, 2010). These studies explicitly discuss the role of the power differentials in collaboration between schools and parents. The next two sections provide an overview of research and theories that arguably belong to the two ends of this spectrum.

2.3.1. Parents as active agents of collaboration: the issues of power

Researchers who write about power in parent-school relationships agree that despite the policy-driven rhetoric of parents and professionals being "equal but different", they are never equally positioned in terms of the impact they have on decisions about educational provision for the children (O'Connor, 2008; Todd & Higgins, 1998).

Researchers in this area tend to adopt a social-constructivist epistemology and normally include a large qualitative element in their research focussing on individual experiences of their participants.

Researchers who adopt more extreme feminist and emancipatory positions describe parent-school relationships as being influenced by the way in which professionals share (or more often refuse to share) power with the parents, and by the deficit discourses that are created amongst professionals about parents in order to preserve their more powerful position. For example, Dobbins and Abbott (2010) in their research on partnerships between parents and teachers in an Irish special school adopt an emancipatory position and refer to the discourse that exists amongst the professionals about parents as being “inherently problematic, (...) subordinately viewed as unreliable and less effective implements of the school agenda, and as a further obstacle to overcome.” (p. 24). Within the same discourse teachers’ views are seen as superior and based on specialised knowledge. A number of other researchers refer to the persistent discourse of “parent as a problem, teachers as an expert” (Cole, 2007; Trainor, 2010).

Other researchers, for example, Todd and Higgins (1998), adopt a milder position, where parents and teachers are viewed as part of a much bigger and more sophisticated system of power hierarchies that includes the LA, school community and other players. Within this system teachers might feel just as powerless as parents, entangled in a culture of blame and scrutiny of their professionalism that leads to defensive responses to parents. Todd and Higgins (1998) conducted a case study of perceptions of power hierarchies between the professionals and the mother during the process of assessment for a statement of SEN for her son. The study involved the Teacher, Head Teacher, Educational Psychologist and a member of the panel that was deciding whether the assessment should go ahead. Through individual interviews the authors discovered that none of the participants felt they had power in the decision making process and some of their actions were guided by the desire to avoid blame. The authors write that their results “challenge any easy dichotomy of parents as powerless and professionals as powerful” (p. 234).

Cultural Capital Theory

A theoretical framework that is often adopted by authors examining the impact of power and beliefs on parent-school relationships comes from *Cultural Capital Theory*. This theory was developed by an influential French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and later was successfully applied to the field of family-school interactions by an American sociologist Annette Lareau (see Lareau, 2015; Trainor, 2010; Gillies, 2006 for an overview). In brief, according to Cultural Capital Theory people show their belonging to different social groups through their *cultural capital* – a large collection of symbolic elements such as people's skills, tastes or life styles. Social capital comes in three forms: *objectified form* that refers to the belongings that people acquire to mark their affiliation to a social group (e.g. special books or a luxury car); *embodied form* that refers to people's ingrained behaviours that identify them as a particular social group member (e.g. manners or accents); and *institutionalised form* that refers to formal memberships in groups and institutions (e.g. educational degrees etc.). Cultural Capital Theory also refers to the *habitus* – a collection of deeply ingrained ways of behaviour that help people navigate their social group environment; and the *field* – informal rules of the game that exist within different social practices, including education. Cultural capital differs from group to group and possession of high cultural capital is important for acquisition of a particular outcome or an opportunity within the social group that uses this cultural capital.

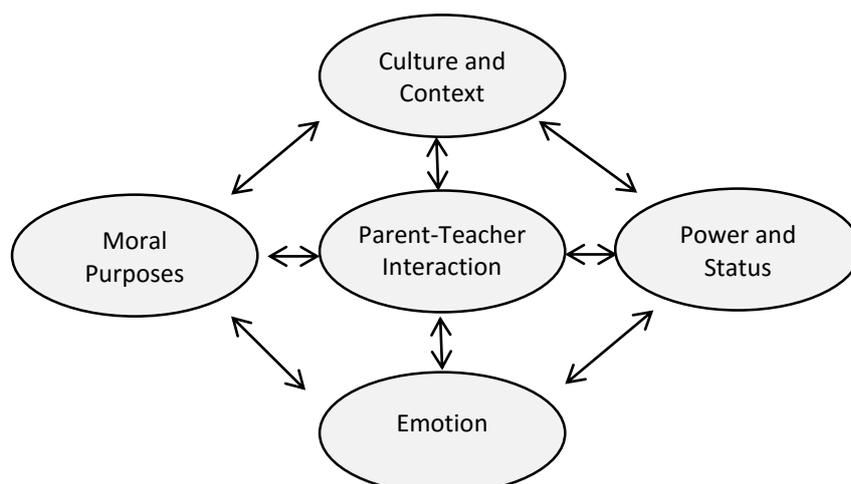
From the reviewed literature, research by Trainor (2010) applied Cultural Capital Theory to parent-school relationships in the most explicit way. Thus, Trainor argues that education, as any other social practice, functions in a way that preserves already-existing power differentials rather than interrupts them. There is specific cultural capital associated with the practice of special education: e.g. placing a problem within the child to demonstrate the knowledge of the *field*, or purchasing additional educational toys and equipment as *objectified capital*. This is the only type of cultural capital that parents could use to achieve their goals in collaboration with teachers. In her research Trainor demonstrates how a parent had to use her cultural capital in terms of fluent use of diagnostic labels (*habitus*) and good knowledge of the special education system (*field*) in order to influence the decisions made about the support for her child with SEND.

Emotional politics of teaching framework

Lasky (2000), in her study into the links between teachers' values and beliefs and their emotional experiences of interactions with parents, adopted Hargreaves's framework of emotional politics of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998) as her theoretical model. Lasky applied the four factors, identified by Hargreaves as influencing teacher's emotional responses to the teachers' experiences of interactions with parents (see Fig. 2.1.). This model allowed Lasky to focus on the emotional and relational side of parent-teacher interactions, while placing these interactions into the context of power hierarchies and social discourses.

Through interviews with teachers Lasky gathered data that seems to support this model. Thus, in teachers' descriptions of their interactions with parents, there was a clear theme of power hierarchy, whereby teachers felt that their professional knowledge and moral beliefs about what is right for children put them into a position of authority relative to parents. Lasky also identified processes of "mutual surveillance" between parents and teachers. The author referred to the Foucauldian understanding of normalising judgements (Madigan, 1992) to highlight how teachers made normalising judgements that classified parents as "good" or "bad", thus identifying a power hierarchy. Lasky also showed that teachers felt judged by the parents in a similar way. Lasky argued that teacher's normalising judgements were structured by the institutional norms of their school environment and profession, however this idea seems to be driven more by other theorists in the area rather than the data itself.

Figure 2.1. A model of influences on parent-teacher interactions (Lasky, 2000)



Lasky emphasised the fact that the above factors gain a particularly strong negative influence on teacher-parent interactions when these interactions are formalistic and episodic, and when there is not a well-developed relationship between the two parties based on “sustained contact, equality, fluidity, increased depth of shared meaning, values, goals and affinity” (p. 849).

Summary: collaboration, beliefs and power.

To summarise, within the research that links beliefs and values, power, and parent-school relationships, the first are often seen as a way of marking social boundaries between different groups of people. Some researchers take a view that beliefs and values do not only mark these boundaries but are also actively employed by the people in power (normally teachers or other professionals) to preserve the boundaries and the existing power hierarchy by using these beliefs as a reference point for making negative judgements about parents, referred to as “deficit-based discourses” (Lalvani, 2014; Cole, 2007; Sime & Sheridan, 2014). Other researchers, identified that parents and teachers exist within multiple complex power hierarchies, where they can feel both in power and powerless depending on the context. These authors tend to focus on how bureaucracy and institutional norms influence the interactions between teachers and parents (e.g. Todd & Higgins, 1998; Lasky, 2000; Rothe et al., 2014).

Researchers emphasise that teachers need to develop greater awareness of their own belief systems as well as find out about the belief systems held by each individual parent. They suggest that increased opportunities for teachers’ reflection (e.g. Jordan, Reyes-Blanes, Peel, Peel & Lane, 1998), more frequent mutual interactions and communication (Lasky, 2000; Murray et al., 2013; Adams & Christenson, 2000), and a shift in the culture of blame (Todd & Higgins, 1998) are needed to promote more equal and respectful relationships between parents and teachers.

2.3.2. Parents as passive participants of collaboration: topologies, scales and explanatory theories

Research that accepts that parents' role is to passively support the teacher-driven process of education can be loosely allocated into three categories: 1) research that describes behaviours constituting parental involvement with school, thus creating topologies of involvement; 2) research that identifies features of effective collaboration and attempts to measure the quality of this process; 3) research that explores causal and correlational links between different factors, thus striving to develop theories that would explain variations in parental involvement. Researchers in this area tend to adopt more of a positivist or a critical realist perspective and put their efforts into research that can be generalised to a wider population. Surveys, scales and other means of gathering large amounts of normally quantitative data are often used in this area of research.

Topologies of parental involvement

Over the decades of research into parent-school relationships a number of topologies and classifications have been proposed. Detailed overview of these topologies goes beyond the scope of this thesis (see Hornby & Lafaele, 2011 for an overview) and the purpose of this section is merely to illustrate, using the example of one of the most cited models developed by Epstein (2001), the way in which researchers tend to approach classification of parental involvement.

Epstein identified six distinct forms of parental involvement (see Table 2.3) that together form the basis for effective home-school partnership.

Table 2.3. Six types of parental involvement, adapted from Epstein, 2001.

Forms of parental involvement	Examples
Parenting	School provides home visits, courses etc. to help parents develop parenting strategies and environment (e.g. food, shelter and safety) supportive of learning.
Communicating	School ensures regular and effective face-to-face and written communication about students' progress, behaviour and activities.

Volunteering	School provides opportunities for parents to use their resources and skills to help within the school.
Learning at home	School shares information and skills parents up at supporting their children with home-work and learning.
Decision making	School supports active parental committees and councils and promotes parent leadership and participation.
Collaboration with the community	School shares with parents information on local services and educational activities; involves students in helping the local community.

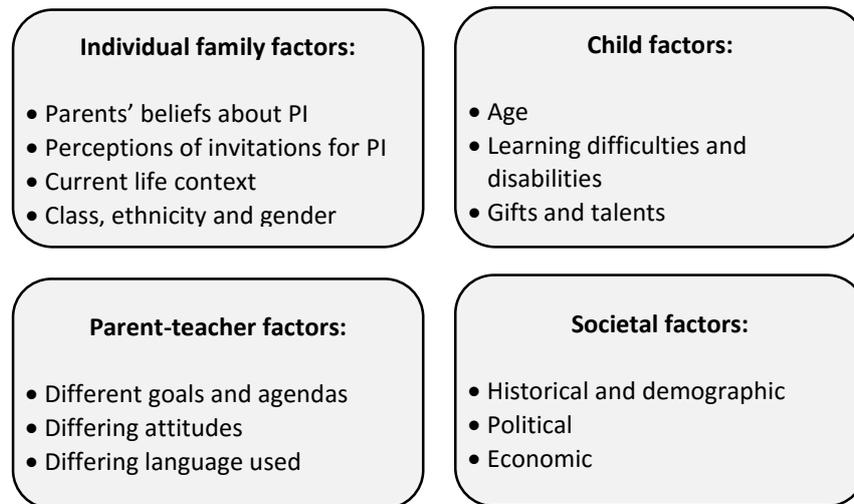
Epstein saw children’s education as developing under the influence of three spheres: home, school and community. He argued for agreement and equal partnership between these three spheres in order to ensure best outcomes for children.

Moorman Kim and her colleagues (2013) point out that components of family-school interactions can be divided into *structural* and *relational*, where the former refers to formal activities that parents undertake in relation to their child’s school, while the latter refers to attitudes and the quality of the relationships between parents and teachers. From this perspective, Epstein’s model puts a strong emphasis on the structural components. The same seems to be true for several other topologies of parental involvement (see Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Moorman Kim et al. (2013) point out that the relational component, which includes beliefs and values, received relatively little attention from researchers. This component seems to have received more attention from those researchers who moved beyond the description of forms of parent-school partnership towards investigating factors that seem to support or hinder this process.

Home-school partnership: associated factors and measures

Effectiveness of home-school partnerships has been extensively researched. For example, Hornby and Lafaele (2011), on the basis of an extensive literature review, proposed a classification of factors that were reported to act as barriers for parental involvement (PI). The authors propose four overarching categories that seem to encompass these factors (see Fig. 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Model of factors acting as barriers to PI (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011)



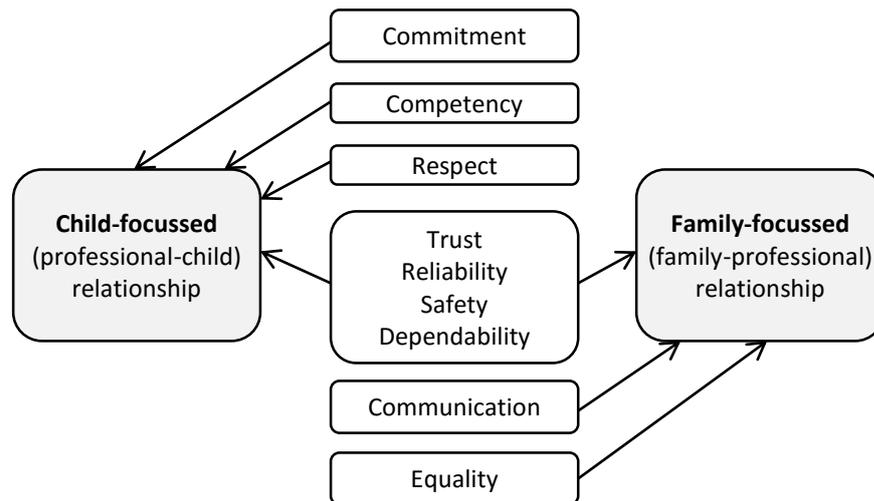
This model, that summarises research in this area, illustrated the passive role that authors tend to ascribe to the parents: it does not include any individual *school or teacher* factors, thus implicitly shifting the responsibility for improving involvement towards the parent.

This gap in understanding of teacher-related factors was noted by Summers and her colleagues (2005) who conducted a large-scale study into parents' perceptions of partnership and on its basis developed a Family-Professional Partnership Scale. Summers et al. used results of their previous qualitative research, whereby parents identified six dimensions of high quality partnerships (see Fig 2.3.). In their second study the authors conducted a large-scale survey where they asked parents to rank these six dimensions. In the process of the statistical analysis they identified that many of the original factors were highly interdependent, which led them to propose a new two-dimensional model of parent-professional partnership that included child-focussed and family-focussed relationship.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, just as Hornby and Lafaele's model (2011) did not include teacher-related factors, the above model does not seem to include any family-related factors, suggesting that parents tend to place the responsibility for effective collaboration onto the professionals. Summers and her colleagues suggested that the scale developed in their study could be used to structure

teacher training and professional development. However, they recognised the psychometric limitations of the scale in terms of its generalisability to a wide range of families.

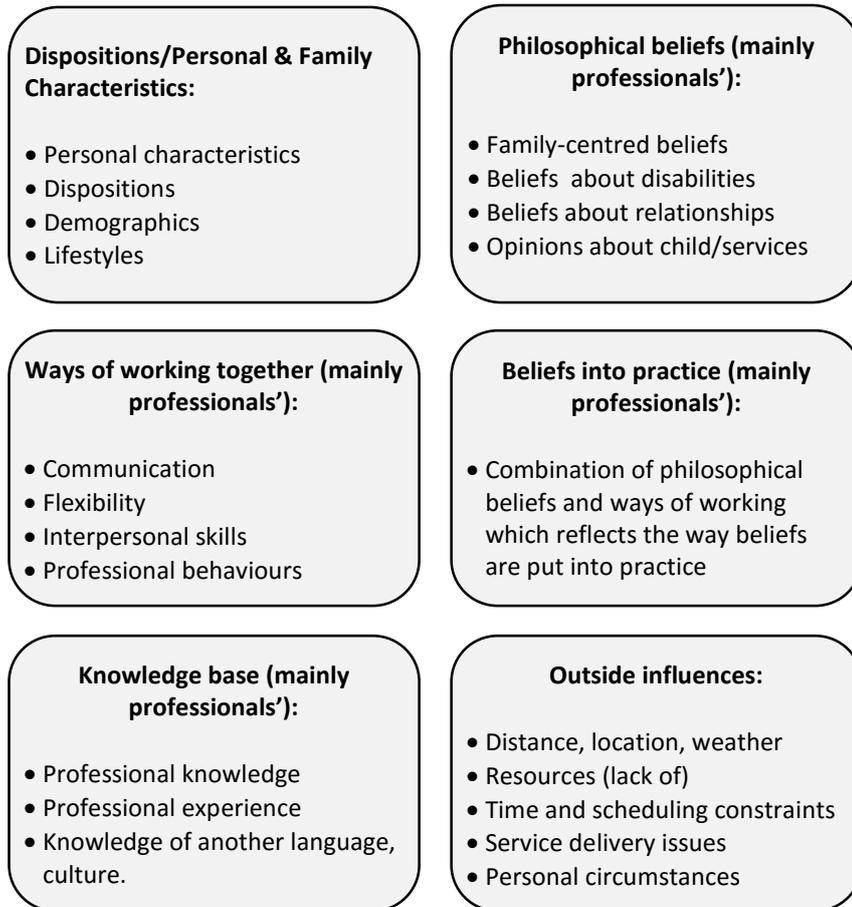
Figure 2.3. Six original dimensions and the two-dimensional model of family-professional partnership (adapted from Summers et al., 2005)



Some researchers attempted to simultaneously gather both parental and professionals' views on factors that enhance collaboration. For example, Dinnebeil and her colleagues (1996) on the basis of a large scale qualitative survey sent both to parents and to key workers in early intervention services, proposed six categories of factors enhancing collaboration (see Fig. 2.4).

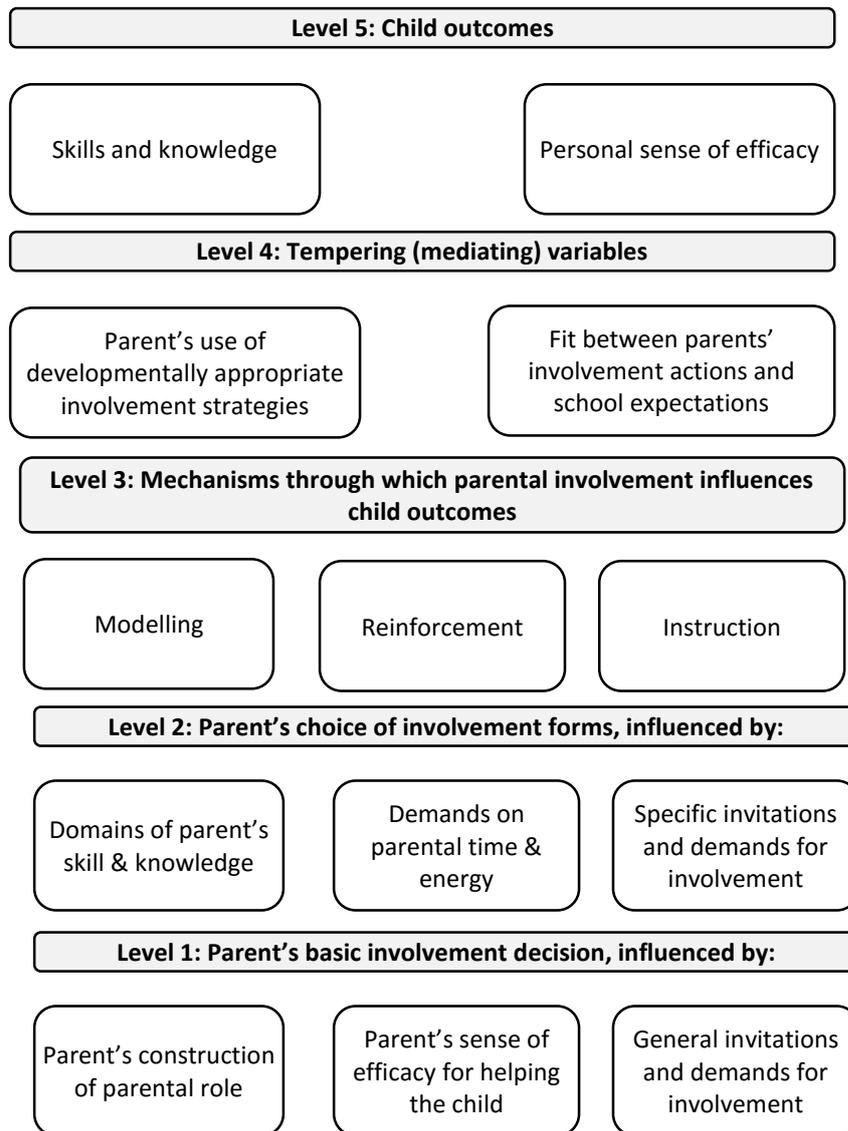
Finally, a mention should be given to the research originating from the work of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997). The authors developed a model that they hoped could explain the relationships between different factors impacting on parental involvement and on the positive outcomes for the students. The model allocated the factors linked to the parental involvement into five levels, each of which had a specific role to play in the quality of the involvement and the outcomes (see Fig 2.5.)

Figure 2.4. Six categories of factors enhancing collaboration (adapted from Dinnebeil et al., 1996)



Subsequently, their colleagues (Green et al., 2007; Moorman Kim et al., 2013) conducted further research on the first level of the model. Their results suggest that parental motivational beliefs (beliefs about their role and their self-efficacy) are related to the level of parental involvement (Green et al., 2007); to the quality of parent-teacher relationships and to some of the child’s outcomes (Moorman Kim et al., 2013). This research is often quoted as evidence for parents’ motivational beliefs being an important factor in home-school relationships.

Figure 2.5. Factors linked to parental involvement (adapted from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).



Summary: the place of beliefs within the models of parental involvement

Models of parental involvement vary in the importance they allocate to the beliefs held by parents and professionals, from a minimal importance in models that focus on structural factors (e.g. Epstein, 2001), to a much greater importance in models focussing on relational factors (Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Moorman Kim et al., 2013). Beliefs and values included in relational factors often seem to be linked with the *process of the collaboration* itself, e.g.

professionals' beliefs about the importance of family-centred practice (Dinnebeil et al., 1996), or parental beliefs about their role as parents (Moorman Kim et al., 2013).

There seems to be some consensus amongst researchers on what other factors might impact on collaboration. Thus, parents tend to see teachers' characteristics, such as open communication style and ability to show commitment and respect, as central for effective collaboration (Summers et al., 2005; Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Dobbins & Abbott, 2010). Professionals tend to see differences in cultures and languages as a barrier (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Dinnebeil et al., 1996). There is also an overall agreement that regular communication is at the core of effective collaboration (Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Summers et al., 2005). Insufficient resources and parents' past negative experiences of professionals or education are sometimes mentioned as a barrier (Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Dobbins & Abbott, 2010).

In this section some very general trends in research into beliefs in the context of collaboration were highlighted. The next section looks at several pieces of research much more carefully and discusses in detail their results and methodological strengths and weaknesses in order to inform the structure of the present research project.

2.4. Critical analysis of the relevant research studies

This section first describes some general themes that emerge from the results of the eleven research projects selected for critical analysis (see section 2.2 for the selection procedure). It then focusses on some common methodological issues of the research in this area and outlines the links with the present research project.

2.4.1. Themes emerging from the research

Approaches to researching values and beliefs

With very few exceptions the selected articles do not report on values and beliefs about either parenting or education as a *general category*. Instead, the researchers who had a specific focus on beliefs tended to develop relatively narrow categories of beliefs they were specifically interested in, such as beliefs about parental role (Moorman Kim et al., 2013), or the value of parental involvement (Sime & Sheridan, 2014). The authors who did not have beliefs as the main focus of their research tended to report on an even narrower range of beliefs that was mentioned by their participants as part of their discussions (e.g. beliefs about teachers' and parents' roles in preparation for school in Rothe et al.'s (2014) research into transition into primary school). In either case, researchers did not tend to explore beliefs as a *system* of views and moral standards, thus identifying a marked theoretical difference with the approach to the topic adopted in the present research (see section 1.5.2). The exception to this rule were studies by Gillies (2006) and Hauser-Cram et al. (2003) which attempted a broader exploration of parental perspectives on child-rearing and teachers' perspectives on education respectively. Table 2.4 gives an overview of the content of beliefs covered in the research (for a more detailed description, please refer to Appendix 1).

Table 2.4. Content of values and beliefs

Author, year, country	Beliefs / values held by parents	Beliefs / values held by teachers /professionals
Research <i>not</i> in the context of SEND		
Crozier & Davies, 2007, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental role • Parental self-confidence • Schools' expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School policies and beliefs • Parents' parenting practices
Gillies, 2006, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child rearing / development • School environment • Home environment • Ways of showing love and care 	Not covered
Sime & Sheridan, 2014, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of education • Value of parental involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals' skills of developing relationships
Hauser-Cram, Sirin & Stipek, 2003, USA	Not covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of education • Teacher-perceived differences between them and parents (discipline; parental involvement; teaching)

Lasky, 2000, Canada	Not covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental parenting practices • Teacher's expertise • Parental attitudes towards teachers.
Research in the context of SEND		
Murray, Handyside, Straka & Arton-Titus, 2013, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' perceived differences between them and teachers • Partnerships 	Not covered
Rothe, Urban & Werning, 2014, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special schools and deferring school start • Parental / teacher role in preparation for school • Academic progress • Professional expertise 	Not covered
Moorman Kim, Sheridan, Kwon & Koziol, 2013, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental role construction • Parental self-efficacy beliefs 	Not covered
Todd & Higgins, 1998, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labels • Professionals' skills of developing relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of parental involvement • Parental behaviour in school
Trainor, 2010, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labels • Inclusion 	Not covered
Dinnebeil, Hale & Rule, 1996, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of family-centred working and empowerment • Disability / labels. • Importance of family-professional relationships 	The same (data from both parents and professionals analysed together)

One can tentatively observe that the themes in participants' beliefs tend to differ between studies done in the context of SEND and outside of this context. For parents of children with SEND issues of labelling, inclusion and partnership with professionals seem to be more potent. At the same time, outside of the SEND context the participants spoke more about topics such as the value of education, parenting practices and home-school relationships.

Finally, the voices of teachers and other professionals seem to be significantly underrepresented in the research done in the context of SEND. This might be due to a strong emancipatory agenda that exists amongst the researchers interested in this area which leads them to focus more on parental experiences in order to empower their participants. Nevertheless, teacher-held values and beliefs as well as their perspectives on collaboration seem to require further research. Moreover, as was argued by Todd and Higgins (1998) there are

occasions when teachers also feel disempowered and might need help to put their views across.

The nature of the link between beliefs and parent-teacher interactions

While all of the researchers argued that there is a link between beliefs and parent-teacher interactions, the nature of this hypothesised relationship differed depending on the researcher's theoretical position.

Some authors, particularly those who adopted Cultural Capital Theory in their research, hypothesised that beliefs affect the quality of the relationships by creating a mismatch in parent and teacher perspectives, as well as making it more difficult for parents to put their view across due to the lack of education-related cultural capital (Trainor, 2010; Rothe et al., 2014; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Gillies, 2006; Todd & Higgins, 1998; Lasky, 2000). However, some of these studies shared similar methodological limitations related to confirmability of the findings (please refer to section 2.4.2).

Murray and her colleagues (2013) hypothesised that the causal relationship between beliefs and parent-teacher interactions works the other way: it is the quality of the relationships that affects the beliefs held by the parents. Thus, the authors invited parents of children with SEND to join a 16 week course run as a part of specialist teacher training. During this course parents and trainees studied alongside each other; parents shared with the trainees their parenting experiences; and trainee teachers shadowed families at home and reflected on their experiences. The authors demonstrated how this intensive relationship-building time empowered parents and shifted their beliefs about this particular group of trainees and about partnerships with professionals in general. However, due to the rather unique set up of this course the applicability of their findings to a typical parent-teacher relationship cannot be assumed.

Some researchers do not attempt to identify a causal relationship and just point out the link between beliefs and collaboration. Thus, Moorman Kim and her colleagues (2013), found a significant correlation between teacher-reported quality of the relationships with parents and parent-reported motivational beliefs

(i.e. parental role constructions in regards to schooling and self-efficacy in supporting their child's education).

Two studies (Murray et al., 2013; Hauser-Cram et al., 2003) specifically looked into perceived *differences* in values between parents and teachers – an approach that was also adopted in the present research. Thus, Murray and her colleagues asked the parents before and after their experience of participation in teacher-training “How do you think expectations for partnership may differ between parents and professionals?” (p. 152). However, in their findings they did not report parents' answers. Hauser-Cram and her colleagues (2003) in their questionnaire for teachers included five questions worded as follows: “Are there differences between the parents' values or preferences and your values with respect to the educational program in the following areas: discipline, reading, writing, math, parents' role in assisting their child?” (p. 816). The authors reported that the bigger the teacher-perceived difference in these values, the lower the teacher's expectation of the student's future academic progress. While the researchers report good internal consistency for these 5 questions (high Cronbach's Alfa), they do not discuss the construct validity of the measure. Giving the highly personal and complex nature of beliefs and values it seems questionable whether perceived differences in them can be measured by a simple question. This research gives interesting insights into teachers' expectations of students' progress. However, it does not discuss parent-teacher interactions.

Main factors linked to collaboration

When looking into the link between beliefs and collaboration it is important to consider other factors that researchers in the area identified as having a strong influence on parent-teacher relationships. Two important factors were often referred to in the reviewed articles.

First of them is what Trainor (2010) described as “structural components of special education”, referring to the bureaucracy and rigidity of the systems that exist around SEND provision (p. 260). Trainor's main focus was on the way parents used their cultural capital to access educational resources for their

children. However, she discovered that it was not only the cultural capital, but also the *structural limitations* of the educational system that impacted on parents' interactions with the teachers.

The same theme was emphasised in Todd & Higgins (1998) who wrote that the way professionals acted during a statutory assessment process was guided by the regulations as opposed to their personal agency, thus often leaving them feeling powerless.

Finally, Rothe and her colleagues (2014) noted that teachers in their study conducted in Germany were put in a position of a role conflict. These pre-school teachers were, on one hand, expected to build up relationships with parents (which they often did successfully); on the other hand, at the end of pre-school they were expected to make judgements about each child's suitability for mainstream primary schooling. This decision had to be based on rigid assessment procedures and if the assessment showed that a child is not suitable for mainstream schooling, then the teacher's relationship with the parent were often put under significant strain.

The second factor that was considered as important by a number of authors was the professional's *ability to establish effective relationships* with parents, or what Dinnebeil and her colleagues described as a "professional way of working" (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Murray et al., 2013; Todd & Higgins, 1998; Dinnebeil et al., 1996). This factor includes in itself the way professionals behave towards parents (e.g. honesty, respect, flexibility), the personal characteristics that they are perceived to possess (e.g. open style of communication, friendliness, commitment to help), and the professional beliefs about working with parents (e.g. focus on family-centred way of working, empowering parents). Researchers do not elaborate on what supports teachers to develop and maintain these useful skills and traits. Some authors (Dobbins & Abbott, 2010) use terms such as "personal characteristics" suggesting that these professional behaviours are somewhat fixed and difficult to shift. Others (Dinnebeil et al., 1996) adopt terms such as "interpersonal practices" and "principles that guide relationships" that seem to include a greater possibility of development and change.

2.4.2. Methodological issues in the research

This section summarises common methodological issues related to the reviewed research. Please refer to Appendix 1 for detailed description of methodologies and methodological strength of the reviewed studies.

Researching beliefs and values: validity and credibility

From the eleven articles reviewed, nine reported on qualitative studies. With research suggesting that beliefs might vary depending on the ethnicity, socio-economic status and personal circumstances (see section 2.3), this area lends itself more naturally to qualitative methodologies that allow greater exploration of individual experiences. Qualitative approaches allow the researcher to improve *confirmability* and *credibility* of the research findings by using recommended methods (Creswell, 2013; Robson, 2011; Stiles, 1999). For example, Trainor (2010) met with her participants twice: first in a focus group format and then during an individual interview. She used this opportunity to check back with them her understanding of their experiences. Many studies used independent researchers to do a second-coding of the data to improve the quality of their interpretation (Dinnebeil et al., 1996). Overall, these methods improve chances that the values and beliefs elicited in the process of the research were understood correctly and fully by the researcher.

At the same time, ensuring *construct validity* of the tools used to measure values and beliefs in the quantitative studies (i.e. checking that these tools actually measure beliefs and values as they are understood by the theorists in the area, or measured by other well-established instruments) seems to be more difficult. The two quantitative studies which were reviewed for this paper (Moorman Kim et al., 2013; Hauser-Cram et al., 2003) both reported high Cronbach's alpha for their measures, thus suggesting good internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. However neither of the articles discussed the issue of construct validity of the measures, thus leaving it as a potentially significant methodological limitation.

Diversity of the sample

In the field of research into parental involvement, recruiting a diverse parental sample becomes particularly difficult, as by the very nature of the topic, parents who find it difficult to collaborate with schools are less likely to engage with researchers. Overall, the researchers were aware of the issue and applied a range of methods to overcome it with varying degrees of success (e.g. accessing families through established services as in Murray et al. (2013), or applying a purposeful sampling technique as in Gillies (2006)).

However, there seemed to be an overall lack of reporting on the uptake rate of the research invitations. Out of nine studies into the involvement of parents only four reported the up take rate. This affects the transferability of the findings as the reader knows neither the numbers nor the characteristics of the parents who chose not to take part in the research process, and voices of parents who find it most difficult to work with professionals tend to remain under-represented.

There is also a widely-spread issue of under-representation of fathers in the reviewed research. Dinnebeil and her colleagues (1996) used a combination of purposeful and random sampling techniques to overcome this issue, however the authors then did not report on the gender composition of their sample. Other studies did not seem to employ any methods for recruiting more fathers into the process.

Reflexivity and permeability

Reflexivity – the researcher’s ability to understand how his or her predispositions impact on the process of the research and vice versa – is considered to be an important measure of quality in qualitative research (Stiles, 1999; Finlay, 2008).

Some research in the field of home-school relationships was emancipatory in its purpose, whereby the researchers viewed parents as being disadvantaged by cultural practices and discourses used in the educational system. The researchers wanted to help the parental voice to be heard by the teaching community, in order to shift the deficit-based discourses and also to make

teachers more aware that some of the educational practices support existing power hierarchies and further disadvantage parents (Crozier & Davies, 2007; and Gillies, 2006).

In these emancipatory pieces of research the researchers started from well-defined philosophical and theoretical positions. This suggests that it would have been particularly important for them to demonstrate high levels of reflexivity in order to persuade the reader that their data is driven by the participants' rather than researcher's views. For example, Trainor (2010) conducted research into parental use of their cultural capital in order to make special education system work for their children. In her thorough report she mentioned an unexpected theme of bureaucracy and rigidity of the system that emerged in her data and challenged some of her original theoretical assumptions.

However, other researchers were not that clear about reporting their reflexive processes. For example, in the research reports by Lasky (2000), Crozier and Davies (2007), and Gillies (2006) the impact of the outcome data on the researchers and any changes in their original position were not mentioned. On the contrary, the way these reports are structured gives an impression that in the "results" section the authors write about their original argument using data to illustrate the points, as opposed to reporting on the patterns that emerged from the data and then using them to support or challenge their original argument.

2.5. Summary: theoretical framework and aims of the research

This chapter described a rich and diverse field of research into parent-school collaboration with a particular focus on the role that values and beliefs have in this process. It demonstrated how different researchers chose different methodological and epistemological approaches in their research and adopted different theoretical understandings of collaboration and beliefs.

The author's views (see section 1.4) on the place of beliefs in home-school collaboration aligned closely with Cultural Capital Theory as it has been applied to home-school relationships (Trainor, 2010; Gillies, 2006). In line with this theory, within the present research project educational and parenting beliefs were seen as predominantly socially constructed. Furthermore, it was

hypothesised that the way parents and teachers can follow and express their beliefs is shaped by the context of power differentials. Differences in power and access to relevant resources means that some people are more restricted than others in guiding the process of support for the child, which impacts on the process of collaboration (Lareau, 2015).

The theoretical framework for the present research project was also informed by the theoretical discussion in Todd and Higgins's (1998) article. There the authors emphasise the complex nature of power hierarchies between parents and teachers and call to move away from the simple "powerful professionals versus powerless parents" discourse prevalent in the literature that follows Cultural Capital Theory, whereby parent-teacher relationships are seen as a two-party power struggle. In their research Todd and Higgins demonstrate that parents and teachers seem to be positioned within several power hierarchies and are to some extent bound by the constraints of SEND support systems. The authors also suggest that the "culture of blame" feeds deficit discourses about both parties which become most evident in the context of disagreements around support for students with SEND.

The review of the literature in the area has indicated several gaps in the research. Firstly, there seems to be a lack of studies which focus on both parent-school collaboration and beliefs or values. At the same time, researchers often express opinions that *differences in views* on parenting (Lasky, 2000; Harry, 2008) as well as on educational (Gillies, 2006; Hauser-Cram et al., 2003) practices are linked to the *quality of collaboration*.

Secondly, there seemed to be a lack of research that explored parenting and educational beliefs as a *system* that guides one's behaviour and influences social interactions. Present research attempted to address this issue by employing personal construct methodology to elicit participants' parenting and educational beliefs and values – an approach that apparently has not been tried previously in this area.

Finally, there seemed to be a lack of research, particularly in the context of SEND, which focussed simultaneously on beliefs held by teachers and by parents. This meant that within each research project the voices of one of these

two groups were absent, thus not allowing direct comparisons to be made or both perspectives to be taken into account.

This research project, described in the next chapter strived to address this gap and included both parties in the sample with the following aims:

- To explore and compare values and beliefs held about parenting and education by teachers and parents of children with SEND.
- To tentatively explore the links between these values and beliefs and the quality of collaboration between the two parties.

This research project also strived to address other methodological challenges of the research in the area, particularly related to the sample diversity and reporting of the uptake rates; and credibility of the data. The methodology that was developed for these purposes will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Overview of the chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear explanation of the process of the research set in the context of the research questions and the philosophical orientation of the author. The chapter starts from clarification of the philosophical paradigm adopted in the research, including its ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. It then brings together the purpose and aims of the research which inform the five research questions. Following this, the chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research procedure, including the sampling, data gathering and data analysis strategies, and justifies the choice of the research methods. The chapter finishes with a discussion of quality indicators and ethical considerations of the research.

3.2. Philosophical paradigm of the research

3.2.1 Introduction: philosophical paradigms in research

Ontological and epistemological positions refer to the philosophical perspectives researchers adopt in relation to the *nature of the phenomena* they set out to study and the *nature of the knowledge* about the phenomenon, respectively (Mertens, 2010). Mertens suggests that ontology and epistemology form two parts of a philosophical research paradigm: the system of beliefs that explicitly or implicitly underlies any research activity. According to Mertens, a philosophical paradigm also includes beliefs about axiology (*nature of ethics*) and methodology (*ways of acquiring new knowledge*). On the basis of differences in epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology Mertens recognises four main research paradigms: post-positivist; constructivist; transformative; and pragmatic while other researchers may draw the line between research paradigms in slightly different ways (Robson, 2011).

It is generally agreed that the researcher's philosophical paradigm has to be both well understood by the researcher, and made explicit to the reader, as it encourages reflexivity and allows the readers to develop a deeper understanding and critique of the research work (Mertens, 2010; Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012). Philosophical paradigm helps the process of research to acquire a clear internal logic, ensuring that all its components correspond to one way of understanding the world (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

However, some researchers debate whether it is crucial to elaborate one's philosophical paradigm for carrying out high quality research; and whether different paradigms are as incompatible as some argue (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002; Badley, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Robson (2011) points out that in real-world research the philosophical position often is not clear-cut which might be one of the reasons for the researchers often either not identifying or not reporting their philosophical paradigm.

The *pragmatic paradigm* was specifically developed as an alternative to traditional epistemologies that would address the discord between espoused methodological theories and the real-world practice (Badley, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Robson (2011) describes it as an 'anti-philosophical' philosophy of research, whereby the *practicality, effectiveness* and *ethical value* of research (rather than the philosophical position of the researcher) shape the research design, thus making it well suited for the real-world research. Pragmatism brings a philosophical basis for being flexible and following common sense in choosing the methodology that suits one's research question and maximises the effectiveness of the research process (Mertens, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

3.2.2. Ontology and epistemology

The author's perspective on the *nature of* and *knowledge about* values, beliefs and collaboration (see sections 1.4. and 2.5) aligned most closely with the social-constructionist paradigm whereby the phenomenon is viewed as being constructed in social interactions between people (Robson, 2011). Thus,

in agreement with Cultural Capital Theory, which has been adopted as a theoretical framework for the present research, the author treated the issues of social discourses and power dynamics between different social groups as important in studying parents' and teachers' beliefs and interactions (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.5 for discussion). At the same time the author also recognised the existence of an external reality (i.e. the reality agreed on by all people regardless of their social contexts) which needs to be taken into account when investigating people's experiences and conceptions. Thus, parent-teacher interactions might be developing in the context of limited resources and the constraints of the educational system – factors that people commonly agree are potent in this context (see sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.1 for discussion).

Recognition of an external reality is a common feature of what Nightingale and Cromby (2002) referred to as a “milder” form of social-constructionism. The authors disagreed with the claim that any knowledge could be reduced to social convention: “linguistic meaning and signification is shaped and constrained by embodiment, materiality and social-cultural institutions, interpersonal practices and historical practices (...). But within such constraints, language, in its objective materiality, discursively co-constitutes the realities we experience” (p. 706).

3.2.3 Methodology and axiology

The way in which the author construed the *process of research* (i.e. the methodology) was pragmatic. Thus, the research had two main features of pragmatist research. Firstly, the author was guided by the *research questions* as opposed to the *epistemological position* when making important decisions about the research design, which is a key feature of pragmatic research (Badley, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For example, the research diary shows how the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) was chosen on the basis of its potential *usefulness* for eliciting participants' values and beliefs. While this technique is not incompatible with social-constructionist epistemologies (Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012), it is not commonly used within this paradigm. It originates from *constructivism* where people are seen as constructing their

perceptions of reality through *individual* experiences, rather than through exposure to *social* norms and discourses (Robson, 2011).

Secondly, the present research treated *axiological considerations* of the project as important – another common feature of a pragmatist approach that sees research as an action, the ethical consequences and effectiveness of which need to be considered (Mertens, 2010). The research includes features designed to increase the benefits of the research for the participants and the local community. Thus, from the very beginning of the project an “expert group” involving local parents, teachers and local authority professionals was created. The results of the research were fed back to this group in a format designed to stimulate reflection and problem-solving over issues related to parent-school collaboration.

3.3. Purpose, aims and research questions

As discussed in section 1.6, the purpose of this *exploratory* piece of research was to explore the values and beliefs held by parents and teachers, as well as to investigate their place in the process of collaboration. Guided by this purpose and the gaps in the research in the area, the aims of the research were defined as follows (see section 2.5 for discussion):

- To explore and compare values and beliefs held about parenting and education by teachers and by parents of children with SEND.
- To tentatively explore the links between these values and beliefs, and the quality of collaboration between the two parties.

Five research questions were formulated in order to meet these aims. First, for the purposes of extreme cases sample selection (see section 3.4), as well as to familiarise the researcher with the context, the participants’ views on what constitutes high quality collaboration were gathered. Thus, the first research question was set as follows:

RQ1: What do parents and teachers think are the signs of high and low quality of collaboration?

In correspondence with the first aim of the research, the second research question was set as follows:

RQ2: What are the beliefs and values held by parents and teachers about parenting and education?

Due to the complex nature of the second aim of the research, three more research questions were formulated in order to address it:

RQ3: What are the perceived differences and similarities between the teachers and parents in the beliefs and values they hold?

RQ4: What do participants think is the role of the beliefs and values in parent-school collaboration?

RQ5: What are the differences (if any) between participants' beliefs and values in situations of high and low quality collaboration?

3.4. Research design

Social-constructionist epistemology and ontology are closely associated with qualitative research design (Robson, 2011; Mertens, 2010). Additionally, the literature review showed that qualitative methodology is the most suitable and most commonly used methodology for research in the area of beliefs and collaboration (see section 2.4.2).

In line with pragmatic methodology and a social-constructionist perspective, the present research used multiple qualitative methods that were chosen on the basis of their usefulness for answering the research questions. The present research also incorporated a small quantitative element that was employed at the pilot stage for the purposes of sample selection (see section 3.3.2).

3.5. Research procedure

The research comprised of three stages (please see Fig. 3.1 and Appendix 2):

1. Pilot stage (February - April 2015).
2. Main stage (July - November 2015).
3. Feedback stage (April 2016).

3.5.1. Pilot

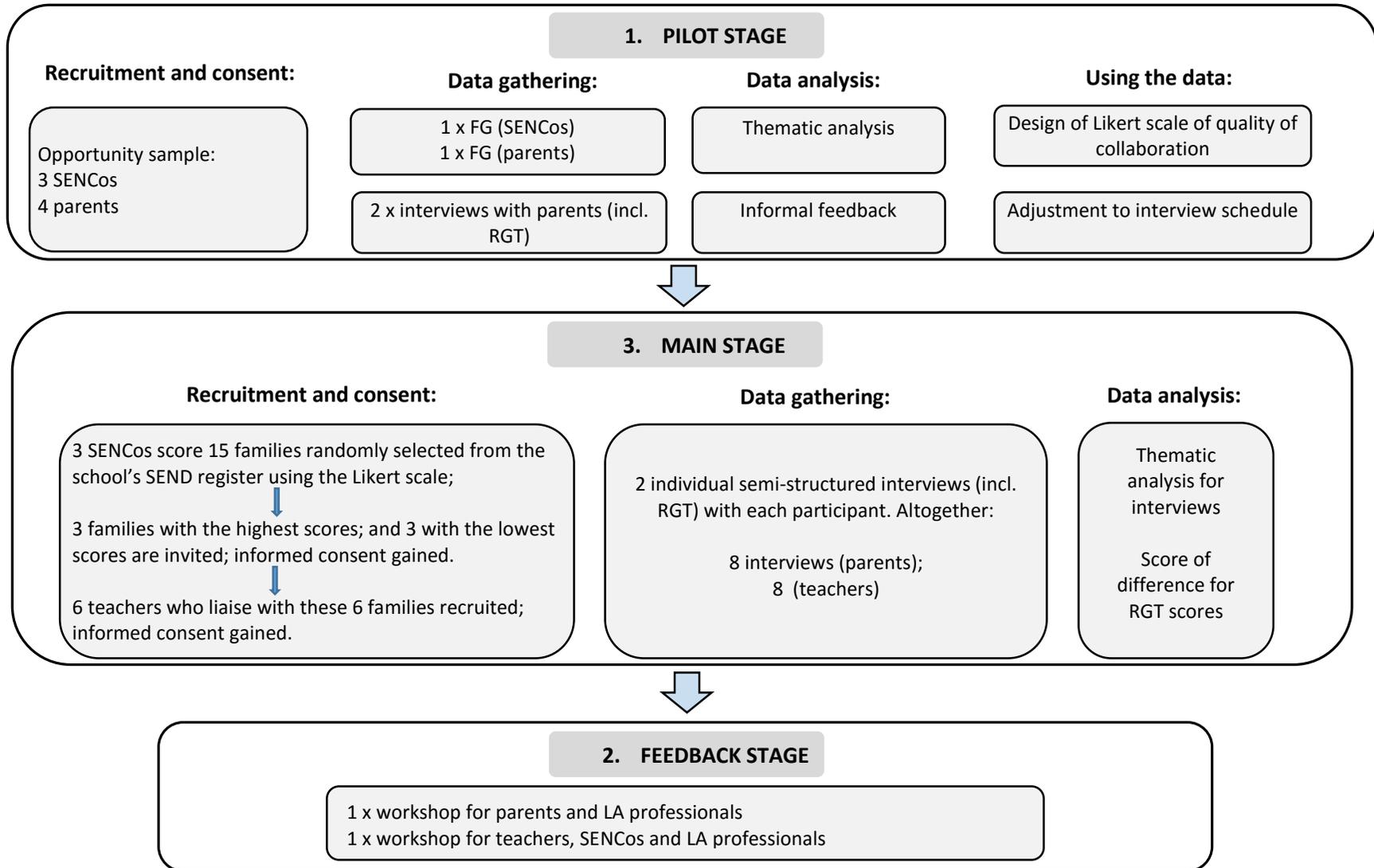
The pilot stage was introduced for three main purposes. The first purpose was to design a participant-driven measure of *perceived quality of collaboration* that would allow selecting extreme cases for the main stage of the research.

Two focus groups were conducted (see Fig 3.1. and section 3.4 for sample details). There the participants were invited to discuss signs of “good” and “poor” collaboration between school staff and families (see Appendix 7 for the focus group schedule). Through thematic analysis (see section 3.8.1) main themes were identified and turned into items in the “Quality of collaboration” Likert scale – a measure of the perceived quality of collaboration between a particular member of staff and a parent (see section 3.7.2).

The second purpose of the pilot was to validate the use of the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). For this purpose, individual interviews were carried out with two volunteers from the parent focus group. The volunteers were offered the RGT followed up by the interview (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2) and then asked whether:

- this technique allowed them to authentically and fully express their values and beliefs about parenting and education;
- this technique and the interview questions were accessible.

Figure 3.1. Research design



SENCo – Special Educational Needs Coordinator; FG – Focus Groups (see section 3.5.1); RGT – Repertory Grid Technique (see section 3.5.2)

Sampson (2004) points out the limitations of using participant feedback for validation of research tools, as participants might not feel empowered or qualified to comment. In line with her recommendations, participants' feedback was supplemented with the researcher's reflections on the process. Subsequently, the interview script was slightly adjusted (see Appendix 13).

Finally, the opportunity to get an insight into the participants' views on collaboration was invaluable for the author as an introduction to the area. This was highlighted as one of the most valuable functions of pilot studies that improves credibility of the research (Sampson, 2004).

3.5.2. Main stage

SENCOs from three participating schools scored fifteen families from their school's SEND register using the Likert scale. This strategy allowed selection of a purposeful extreme case sample for the main stage of the research, i.e. identify parent-teacher dyads with high and low perceived quality of collaboration (Fig. 3.1.; see section 3.6.2 for discussion). As Mertens (2010) described it, "the researcher makes the assumption that studying the unusual will illuminate the ordinary" (p. 321). Thus, it was hoped that employing extreme case sampling could increase the potential of the research to provide information on the links between the beliefs and quality of collaboration.

RGT followed by a semi-structured interview were carried out with each participant individually on two occasions, thus giving the total of 16 interviews. One of the sessions focussed on the topic of parenting, while the other focussed on education (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2).

3.5.3. Feedback stage

Two feedback workshops were offered to the participants: one for the SENCOs; and the other for the parents. The Local Authority professionals with an interest in this area were invited to join the workshops. These meetings were used to feedback the research findings; stimulate reflection on the place of beliefs in the process of collaboration and facilitate a wider discussion on how collaboration between schools and families could be improved.

3.6 Sampling techniques

3.6.1 Pilot stage

The pilot stage parent sample comprised four parents. Due to the time constraints of the pilot it was decided to use a convenience sample that would speed up the recruitment stage (Mertens, 2010). An email was sent out to approximately 750 parents on the Parent Partnership Service mailing list, out of which 5 parents volunteered to participate in the focus group (see Table 3.2. for the sample characteristics). One parent withdrew from the research at the last moment due to child care issues.

This opportunity sample was likely to have a significant selection bias, whereby parents with enough time, resources, high interest in the area and willingness to help were more likely to respond to the email. Thus, the data from this sample is likely to lack transferability, i.e. it does not necessarily describe experiences of other parents.

Tentative comparison of demographic data suggests that, relative to the pilot stage parents, the main stage parent sample had younger children with significantly lower level of need. Main stage parents also had fewer educational qualifications but were all in employment (which is likely to be related to the lower level of child's needs).

Table 3.1. Pilot and main stage parent sample characteristics

	Pilot stage sample (N=4)	Number	Main stage sample (N=4)**	Number
Age of the child (years)	6 - 15 mean = 11.25		7-11 mean = 8.6	
SEND of the child*	Microdeletion syndrom	1	Behaviour	2
	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	3	Dyspraxia	2
	Dyspraxia	1	ADD/DAMP	1
	Mild/severe learning difficulties	2	Confidence	1
	Communication needs	1	Learning	1
	Cerebral Palsy	1		
	Visual Impairment	2		
Parental education	GCSE Grades G-D	1	GCSE Grades G-D	2
	Postgraduate	3	A-levels or Dip.Level 3	1
Gender	Mothers	4	Mothers	3
Ethnicity	English	4	English	3
Employment	Not employed	2	Employed	3
	Employed in a professional capacity	2		

* as identified by parents; most children had multiple needs.

** one parent did not complete demographical data questionnaire.

The pilot stage school staff sample comprised three SENCOs that were also recruited using opportunity sampling technique. An invitation letter was sent out to six schools, three of which agreed to participate in the study. The other three schools, whilst being interested in the research, said that they did not have sufficient time resources to commit to the project. The three schools that were recruited for the pilot stage also took part in the main stage. Therefore, there was little difference between the pilot and main stage school staff sample. Please refer to the Table 3.3 for the schools' demographic data.

3.6.2 Main stage

A combination of randomised and purposeful extreme case selection procedures were employed for the main stage of the study (Metrens, 2010). Three participating schools were asked to randomly select 15 families from the school's SEND register. SENCOs anonymously scored these families using the quality of collaboration Likert scale composed at the end of the pilot stage (section 3.7.1). Two families from each school, one with the highest and one with the lowest score, were invited to the research by the SENCO. If the invitation was declined, the family with the next extreme score was

invited. Once the family gave their initial agreement to participate, the researcher got in touch with the family to answer any questions and obtain informed consent. See Table 3.1 for the sample characteristics.

Table 3.2. School sample characteristics (from The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) reports 2012-2014).

	Type	Pupil premium	Ethnic composition	Level of SEND in school	Ofsted's comment about parental involvement:
School 1	Community primary, Approx. 180 students	Low	Predominantly White British	Average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong partnership with parents; • governing body led developments to strengthen parental involvement; • parents are very well informed about school life.
School 2	Community Primary Approx. 215 students	Average	Predominantly White British	Average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited ways in which parents are kept informed and their views are gathered; • good work with parents of pupils with special educational needs.
School 3	Secondary school and Sixth Form Approx. 2000 students	Well below average	Predominantly White British	Slightly above average	None

The extreme case sampling procedure was designed for two purposes. The first purpose was to study patterns that become more evident in extreme cases than in milder situations (Mertens, 2010). It was hoped that the comparison of parent-teacher dyads with contrasting qualities of collaboration could highlight factors linked with the quality of collaboration, including participants' beliefs and values.

The second purpose was to involve in the research parents and teachers who might find collaboration particularly difficult, and to collect data on the parents who chose not to take part (see Table 3.5 for uptake rates within the parent sample). Lack of diversity of the sample is a common weakness of the studies in the field of parent-school relationships and it was hoped that the above procedure would address this issue (see section 2.4.2 for discussion).

Table 3.3 Dropout rate and amongst parent sample

	Parents with high collaboration score		Parents with low collaboration score	
	Number	Average collaboration score* (range: 18-90)	Number	Average collaboration score* (range: 18-90)
Invited to the project	3	84.1	4	56.8
Rejected invitation (reason)	1 (not replied)	90	1 (not replied) 1 (had a baby)	54 51
Withdrew in the process	0		1 (was not contactable for the second interview)	51
Took part in the research	2	81.1	2**	57

* as scored by SENCo on the Likert scale

**out of these two parents, one only completed one interview

In the process of the sample recruitment, School 3 (see table 3.4) withdrew from the research due to the resignation of the school's SENCo. Initial attempts to recruit additional parents from the remaining two schools were unsuccessful. Considering the time restraints, it was decided to limit the sample to just four parent-teacher dyads. This unavoidably reduced the amount of data from the project and made it more difficult to draw comparisons between the dyads with high and low collaboration scores.

The sampling procedure used for the project did not address the common issue of underrepresentation of fathers (see section 2.4.2). Unfortunately, the attempts to involve fathers were not successful due to the author being

restricted to the working hours, as well as two out of four parents being single.

3.7. Data gathering strategies

The following data gathering strategies were utilised in the research:

- Semi-structured focus groups;
- The Quality of Collaboration Likert scale;
- The Repertory Grid technique;
- Semi-structured individual interviews.

This section explains and critically discusses each of these strategies in the context of the present research.

3.7.1 Pilot stage: focus groups and Quality of Collaboration Likert scale.

The Likert scale

The literature review suggested a number of approaches that have been previously used to assess the quality of collaboration. Quantitative approaches included scales designed to measure the quality of interactions between parents and professionals: Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS, Vickers & Minke, 1995) and Family-Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS, Summers et al., 2005). Both scales were developed on the basis of quantitative large-scale studies conducted in the USA. It was decided that these scales would not be applicable in the context of this research. FPPS

was developed specifically for the context of early years provision and the authors warned against applying it in school context. PTRS focused specifically on the *relational* aspects of parent-teacher interactions. Moreover, the authors warned that this scale was in its early stages of development and should be used with caution.

Qualitative approaches to assessing the quality of collaboration included interviews with the participants on their experiences of collaboration which were reported as a positive or a negative ones (Gillies, 2006; Murray et al., 2013). This approach was not deemed appropriate for this research as it would not allow selection of extreme cases.

Thus, it was decided to develop a Likert scale of the quality of collaboration using views of local parents and school staff gathered through focus groups. It was hoped that using participants' views instead of themes derived from the literature would produce more contextually appropriate Likert scale items.

Through thematic analysis of the focus group discussions (see section 3.8.1) the most prevalent themes were identified and turned into 18 items for the Likert scale (see Appendices 10.1 and 10.2 for parent and teacher versions). The Likert scale was trialled with the SENCOs to ensure the accessibility of the language.

It was not feasible to investigate any psychometric properties of the Likert scale such as the discriminative power of different items, validity and reliability (Robson, 2011). The numerical data produced by the Likert scale was treated as *ordinal* rather than *interval* type and was only used as a guide to identify participants for the purposes of the extreme cases sampling procedure.

Focus groups

Focus groups are considered to be a useful tool for gathering a range of opinions on a topic, capturing the participants' language, and using group

resources to explore a complicated area (e.g. Krueger & Casey, 2000). It is also a time-efficient approach to gathering data that makes it appealing for the pilot stage (Robson, 2011).

Two small focus groups were conducted in a local office (see section 3.6.1 for sample). After some introductory discussions, the attendees were invited to share their views on how they knew when collaboration was going well or not well (see Appendix 7 for focus group schedule). In her role as a facilitator the author followed recommendations by Krueger and Casey (2000): managed the discussion to ensure that participants were comfortable and that different voices were heard; regularly clarified and summarised the discussion to validate the data and stimulate the next step of the discussion.

Strengths and limitations of the pilot stage data gathering techniques

To summarise, there were several main advantages to using a combination of focus groups and the Likert scale for extreme cases selection:

- The Likert scale allowed identification of participants who had either significantly positive or significantly negative experiences of collaboration.
- The items on the scale were produced by the local parents and teachers, thus making it contextually relevant and creating a common language amongst the participants and the author.
- The pilot stage focus groups allowed creation of an “expert group” of interested parents, teachers and other professionals that was then used to feedback the results of the research.

The limitations of the pilot stage data gathering strategies included:

- Due to time constraints it was only possible to conduct two focus groups, thus the data saturation point was, probably, not reached (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Consequently, the Likert scale might not cover all the features of collaboration important for local teachers and parents.
- The limitations of the pilot stage opportunity sample and the differences in characteristics between the pilot and main stage parent samples were discussed in sections 3.6.1 and 3.4.

3.7.2 Main stage: Repertory Grid Technique and individual interview.

The Repertory Grid Technique

Individual semi-structured interviews based on the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) were used to elicit participants' values and beliefs. The RGT was originally developed by Kelly (1991) under the name of the Construct Repertory Test as a clinical assessment tool for generating hypotheses in therapeutic sessions. The test was designed to elicit personal constructs that the client used to "psychologically channelize" new experiences of people and interpersonal relationships (Kelly, 1991, p. 160). Please refer to section 1.5.2 for brief description of the Personal Construct Theory that underpins the technique.

Within the research the RGT proved to be a useful technique and was applied to a very wide range of human experiences: life events, activities, and attitudes to name a few (Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012; Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004). This technique can generate both qualitative and quantitative data, however ontologically it is more closely affiliated with constructivist and social-constructionist research (Bell, 2005).

Participants were interviewed individually twice either at home or in a school office as per personal preference. One session focussed on the topic of

parenting, while the other focussed on education. As suggested in the RGT guidelines (Kelly, 1991; Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012; Yorke, 1978; Bell, 2005) the following procedure was used (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 for the schedule):

STEP ONE: Choosing the elements. For the topic of parenting participants were invited to choose *twelve parents* whom they knew relatively well, which became the initial elements for the grid. For education, the elements were provided by the researcher in the form of *twelve images of school situations* (see Appendix 11).

STEP TWO: Eliciting personal constructs. Participants were invited to select three elements at random and identify how two of them were the same and one was different – i.e. give two opposite descriptions of a personal construct (e.g. “these two parents are very strict, while another one is laid back”). Then one of the elements was replaced with a new element and the procedure was repeated until all twelve elements had been used, thus producing about 10 constructs. Participants’ responses were recorded in a grid format (see Appendix 9 for an example of filled in grid).

STEP THREE: Ranking the grid. Each of the rows in the grid was turned into a scale, where “one” and “ten” represented two polar opposite descriptions of the construct. Participants were invited to score on each scale “*an ideal parent or school*” (depending on the topic of the grid); and “*ideal parent or school as seen by the other*”, referring to the other member of their parent-teacher dyad (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2).

Semi-structured interview

Yorke (1978) warned that the RGT requires a high level of skill on the part of the interviewer and that its careless use can result in weak methodologies and potentially false findings. Yorke observed that “If he [the researcher] regards the administration of the grid as supplying the structure of a

conversation, rather than testing, he can overcome many of the problems [with using the technique] outlined above". (p. 67). Similarly, Kelly (1991) noted that the most precarious assumption behind RGT is that the interviewer gets a good understanding of the personal *meaning* behind the words used to describe personal constructs. Following their observations it was decided to follow up the RGT with a semi-structured interview (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 for interview schedule).

In the interview the elicited constructs were discussed, some links, and the order of importance amongst them were established. Participants were also invited to share their views on the links between beliefs and collaboration which often stimulated a wider discussion of their experiences of collaboration. Thus, the interview served the following purposes:

- To establish whether the RGT elicited what the participant considered to be his or her main values and beliefs in the area (i.e. participant validation).
- To apply the laddering technique to explore the core constructs, or values held by the participant (e.g. Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012).
- To explore participants' perceptions of the link between values and beliefs and the process of collaboration.

Strengths and limitations of RGT in the context of this research

Concepts of "personal constructs" and "values and beliefs" are conceptually close to each other (Horley, 1991; see section 1.5.2). Despite this, the literature review suggests that very few researchers have used the RGT to study beliefs held by teachers or parents. Instead, the preferred data gathering methods within the social-constructionist research in the area appear to be group or individual interviews (Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Gillies,

2006). Nevertheless, researchers who used the RGT technique to study values and beliefs reported it to be a useful data collection tool (Sunley & Locke, 2012; Donaghue, 2003).

In this research the RGT was chosen for the following reasons:

- The RGT provided interviewees with a structure for the conversation, without suggesting any pre-set themes – something that was highlighted as a potential limitation of semi-structured interviews (Joffe, 2012). Joffe pointed out that the less thematic content the researcher brings to the interview, the more authentic the participant's answers are.
- Using the RGT, participants were not required to speak about their beliefs and values directly. According to Donaghue (2003) this reduces social confirmability bias – pressure to create a certain image of oneself in front of the researcher.
- It was hoped that the RGT could provide participants with a more engaging and visual way of talking about their beliefs and values, thus breaking the ice in the beginning of the conversation.
- Research suggests that the RGT elicits constructs that are relatively stable over time (although they can change with significant experiences); and that are linked to people's interpersonal behaviour (Gaines Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012; Bell, 2005). This made it an appealing technique for studying values and beliefs in the context of collaboration.

Two limitations can be mentioned in relation to using the RGT in the context of this research.

- The participants were not initially familiar with the images of school situations that were used as elements for the topic of education (see Appendix 11). Unfamiliar elements have been used in RGT-based research before, however some authors argue that it can lead to final

constructs being less representative of the participant's actual construct system (Bell, 2005; Yorke, 1978). At the same time, Gaines Hardison and Neimeyer (2012) suggest that this issue affects primarily *cross-study* comparison of personal constructs. The authors argue that it is more acceptable for *within one study* comparisons as the uniformity of the research procedure makes this effect less detrimental for the findings. Additionally, participant validation of the constructs further improved the validity of the findings.

- The RGT was developed within the context of Personal Construct Psychology. Taking techniques out of their context could potentially decrease the construct validity of the method (Fransella et al., 2004). Thus, the author was careful to ensure that within the context of this research and a different theoretical framework, the RGT was still applied in line with the main principals of Personal Construct Psychology.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis techniques were chosen on the basis of the types of data gathered, the research questions that this data was intended to answer, and the theoretical perspective and philosophical paradigm of the research (see picture 3.3).

Four types of data were gathered:

- Audio records of focus group discussions; the RGT commentary; and semi-structured interviews;
- Qualitative written material: descriptions of personal constructs extracted from the filled in repertory grids (see Appendix 21);
- Ratings of the “ideal parent/school” and “ideal parent/school as viewed by the other” extracted from the filled in grids (see Appendix 21).

The five research questions were set as follows (see section 3.3):

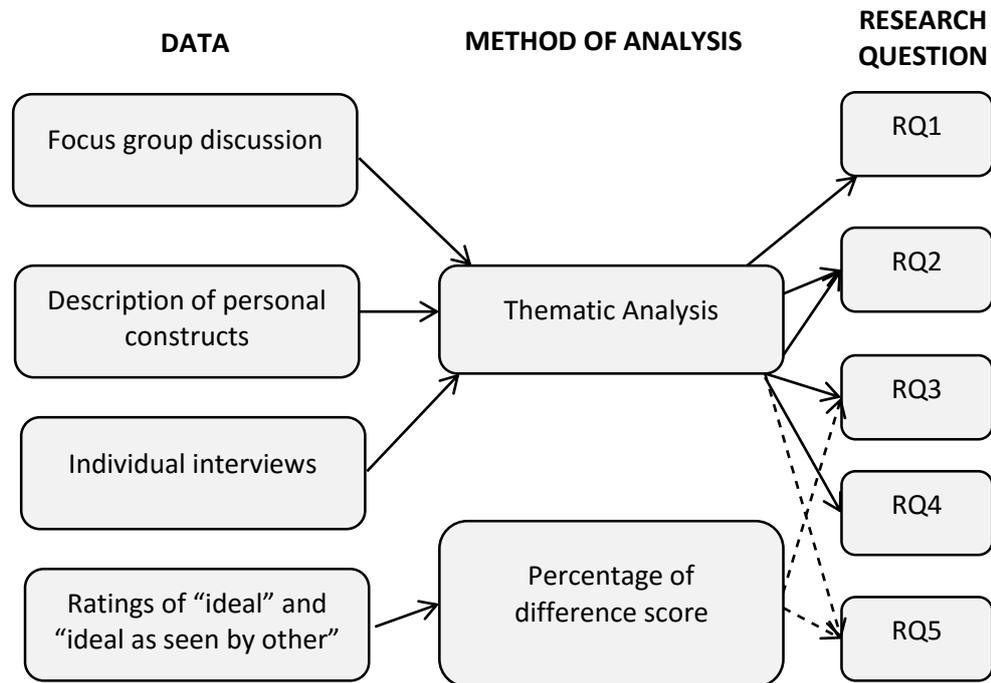
- RQ1: What do parents and teachers think are the signs of high and low quality of collaboration?
- RQ2: What are the beliefs and values held by parents and teachers about parenting and education?
- RQ3: What are the perceived differences and similarities between the teachers and parents in the beliefs and values they hold?
- RQ4: What do participants think is the role of the beliefs and values in parent-school collaboration?
- RQ5: What are the differences (if any) between participants' values and beliefs in situations of high and low quality collaboration?

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

TA is a widely used qualitative data analysis method designed for recognising and organizing patterns within data (Willig, 2013). Joffe (2012) suggests that its particular value is that it combines the power of systematic qualitative data processing approaches (e.g. content analysis) with the power of interpretative approaches. It produces results that are robust as well as going beyond superficial meanings, thus making good use of rich qualitative data.

TA matches well the pragmatic methodological perspective of the author. It is often quoted as a flexible data processing method that could be used with a number of epistemologies and is guided by the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Willig, 2013). Joffe (2012) also points out that TA fits well with socio-constructionist ontology and epistemology thus making it an attractive approach to be used in the context of this research project.

Figure 3.2. The links between research questions, data and analysis



Socio-constructivist ontology & pragmatic methodology

- > Higher potential for answering the research question
- - - - -> Lower potential for answering the research question (see Chapter 4 and section 5.6.2)

Several other approaches to qualitative data analysis had been considered before the decision to use TA was made. For example, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was attractive as a method that allowed in-depth investigation of participants' individual experiences which could have been combined with multiple case study design to get a richer picture of individual beliefs and experiences of collaboration (Willig, 2013). However, IPA would require to provide the participants with maximal freedom to express their views in an open-ended manner so that their individual experiences could be fully explored (Willig, 2013). As such this approach was not deemed suitable for highly structured nature of RGT and the personal construct psychology. Another approaches considered included narrative and discourse analysis that had the power to elicit central meaning-

making “stories” in participants’ descriptions of their beliefs and collaboration or highlight the development of their views over time. These two approaches could have highlighted the links between individual and cultural narratives which would have enriched the understanding of the nature of participants’ beliefs and experiences. However, using these approaches it would not have been possible to paint a *broad* picture of *system of beliefs* held about a particular topic. Similarly to the IPA these approaches also do not lend themselves to the high level of structure implicit in the RGT and as such were not deemed suitable for the project.

On the basis of the above considerations TA was applied to the transcripts in order to answer the relevant research questions (see pic. 3.2). Focus group audio records were transcribed by the author, while interviews were transcribed by a transcription agency.

In line with the guidelines for TA suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), the following procedure was used.

STEP ONE: familiarisation with the data.

The author transcribed the two focus group audio records, thus becoming very familiar with the content. The interview transcripts returned by the agency were checked by the author against the audio records. Thus, all of the fifteen interviews were listened to and transcripts were carefully read at least once.

STEP TWO: coding.

The entire data set was reread and initial codes were recorded (see Appendix 14 for an example of initial coding).

Following Braun and Clarke recommendations two important choices were made about the initial codes’ identification. Firstly, it was decided to use *inductive*, or data-driven, coding (as opposed to deductive, or theory-driven), whereby the author did not follow any specific theory when identifying and

describing the codes. This approach corresponded to the exploratory nature of the research.

Secondly, it was decided to focus more on the *explicit meaning* in the data produced during the focus groups; and more on the *latent meaning* in the interview data. The former decision was linked to the purpose of the pilot stage: to identify the *signs* of high and low quality collaboration. For this purpose there was no need to interpret the *meaning* that participants might have had behind their views.

The latter decision was linked with the social-constructionist ontological position adopted with regard to values and beliefs. Braun and Clarke suggest that this position requires the researcher to look beyond the superficial meanings provided by the participants in order to discover societal discourses that underlie personal opinions.

STEP THREE: allocating codes into themes.

Braun and Clarke define “theme” as a data item that “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” (2006, p. 82). They comment that researchers can decide what size and prevalence of a data item will be sufficient to constitute a separate theme. In this research any, however small, group of codes that clearly described a pattern within the data was accepted as a theme. This was done to ensure that a wide range of views can be captured from a relatively small sample size used in the present research.

In order to identify initial themes, data items associated with initial codes were copied into tables. Then similar codes were brought together into initial themes. Separate tables for each research question were created (see Appendix 15 for an example of initial themes).

STEP FOUR: refining and defining themes.

All tables were reread two to three times until the author felt that all the data items corresponded well with their theme, and that all the themes captured well the meaning of the data within them, as well as of the entire data set (see Appendix 15 for an example of the refinement process). Through this refinement process the final themes were formed. For each theme an overall interpretive summary was created which informed the appropriate title for the theme.

For each theme the prevalence across the whole data set was recorded. The prevalence was calculated as the number of participants who mentioned the theme; and (for data on values and beliefs only) the number of participants who named the theme as one of their core values. The prevalence was used to:

- select themes from the focus group data that could be used as items of the Likert scale;
- compare prevalence of different themes amongst teachers and parents.

Due to the limited data obtained in relation to the third and fourth research questions, it was decided not to move beyond the stage of initial theme identification (see Appendices 18.1 and 18.2 for the initial themes and sections 4.4. and 5.6. for discussion). Thus, altogether three final lists of themes were created: (1) signs of quality collaboration; (2) beliefs about parenting; (3) beliefs about education.

STEP FIVE: creating graphic representation (thematic map).

The final themes were recorded in a graphic form that could effectively communicate to the reader the content of each theme, as well as the links between the themes and overall patterns amongst them. A number of graphic representations were trialled and the final versions were created in the process of the report writing (see sections 4.3. and 4.2. for final thematic maps and Appendix 17 for examples of initial graphic representations of thematic maps). For each area two thematic maps were created: one

contained detailed descriptions of each theme and was designed to capture the complexity of participants' views (see tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3); and another showed broader thematic areas and was designed to highlight overall patterns and connections within the data (see Fig. 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

3.7.2 Descriptions of personal constructs in the areas of parenting and education

The literature suggested two common approaches to analysing descriptions of personal constructs (PCs) elicited in the process of RGT. A theory-driven approach involves classification of PCs into pre-set categories (e.g. Feixas, Geldschläger & Neimeyer, 2002); and a data-driven approach involves classification of PCs into categories suggested by the content of the data (Fransella et al., 2004). In line with the socio-constructionist ontological position the latter approach was used. PC descriptions (see Appendix 21) were merged with the rest of the interview data and analysed using inductive TA as described above.

3.7.3 Numerical data from repertory grids

In order to address the third research question, it was useful to consider the difference between ratings given to the “*ideal parent (or school)*” and “*ideal parent (or school) as viewed by the other*” elements.

There is an on-going debate among RGT users about the value of analysis of the numerical data contained in repertory grids. Researchers often recommend focussing on the *meanings* participants attribute to the world around them, rather than on numbers in the grid and use the numbers only as a guide in the formulation of the hypothesis (Fransella et al., 2004).

In light of this consideration it was decided not to apply the statistical analysis typically used to investigate relationships between the elements in a grid (e.g. Fransella et al., 2004). It was felt that a more meaningful and transparent interpretation of this relationship would be obtained by calculating a non-statistical *percentage of similarity (PS) score*, as recommended by Jankowicz (2004). The PS score was calculated on the basis of the following formula:

$$PS = 100 - \frac{\sum \sqrt{(R1-R2)^2}}{(MD-1)*N} * 100$$

R1 and R2 – rating given to “*ideal parent (or school)*” and “*ideal parent (or school) as viewed by the other*”.

MD – maximum difference possible between the elements (in our case 9)

N – the number of constructs in the grid.

The PS score is a simple measure of similarity between two elements in a grid that allows comparisons between different grids. Thus, it is an appropriate means of providing supplementary information about the participants’ perceptions of similarity with each other.

3.9. Quality indicators

Qualitative researchers debate what constitutes an appropriate way of assessing the quality of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). The design of the present research was guided by the quality measures suggested by Mertens (2010) and Creswell (2013): credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Two more measures were applied: reflection on the social context of the research, i.e. the place of the researcher within the participants’ community (Mertens, 2010), and permeability of the research (Stiles, 1999).

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility assesses whether the conclusions made on the basis of the data were valid. The following steps were taken to strengthen the credibility of the research:

- The author met with each participant at least twice, thus developing a better understanding of their perspectives.
- The author was aware of her forestructure (Stiles, 1999) – the initial understanding of the subject (see sections 1.4 and 2.5). Care was taken not to expose this forestructure in conversations with participants as well as to allow it to change in response to the data – what Stiles (1999) referred to as *permeability* of research (see section 5.5.).
- The combination of interviews and RGT provided a degree of triangulation for participants' values and beliefs.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability assesses the potential of the research findings to be applied to another contextually similar situation.

- The purposeful sampling procedure allowed the involvement of parents who are often underrepresented in research on parental involvement. Their opinions might shed some light on the views of other parents who find it difficult to work with the professionals.
- Characteristics and invitation uptake rates were reported both for the parent and the school sample to help the reader identify other similar contexts where the research findings might be applied.

The small sample size probably reduced the diversity of opinions that were captured. Within the small scale of this research it was not feasible to reach the data saturation point (Willig, 2013). Thus, the findings of the present research should be treated as initial.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability assesses whether the research process was clear enough to allow its replication in a similar context. A clear research protocol was kept and adhered to as described in this chapter. The researcher strived to follow this protocol closely and avoid any deviations that could affect the data.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability assesses whether the researcher's influence on the findings was controlled and accounted for.

- Throughout the interviews and focus group discussions, the author regularly summarised and reviewed main points, thus ensuring participant validation (see Appendices 20.1 and 20.2 for examples of transcripts).
- A number of studies attempted to measure test-retest reliability of RGT, which can be seen as a measure of how independent this technique is of the researcher's influence. Reported reliabilities vary greatly in 0.41-0.95 range depending on the time scale, the measure used and other parameters (Caputi, 2012).

3.9.5 Social context

Apart from her role as a researcher, the author also was a member of the Educational Psychology Service. In some cases this might have impacted on the relationships with the participants. Thus, teacher-participants might have felt more self-conscious openly discussing with the author their professional practice. Parent-participants might have hoped to get an advice on the support for their children. The author was aware of these potential issues and tried to compensate for them with empathy, humour and clear explanations of professional boundaries.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The present research was designed in line with the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2010). Additionally, expecting that some of the parents might come from socially and economically deprived backgrounds, the research incorporated suggestions made by Gorin, Hooper, Dyson and Cabral (2008) on ethical research with vulnerable families.

3.10.1 Informed consent

Research participants were informed about the nature and the purpose of the research in several steps to ensure their full understanding of the process. Firstly, they received an invitation letter (see Appendices 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4); secondly, parents had a chance to approach their school's SENCo with any questions; finally, parents who expressed interest in participation met with the author who explained the process and answered any questions about the research. After this the informed consent form was signed (see Appendix 4).

3.10.2 Confidentiality and safeguarding considerations.

All participants were given a written and verbal explanation of anonymity and confidentiality of the data in line with BPS guidelines (2010). Confidentiality and anonymity were particularly important for some parents and teachers who were in regular contact with each other and needed to be reassured that the other party would not know about the content of the interviews.

Participants were informed verbally and in writing that in the event of a child protection concern becoming apparent the researcher would be obliged to follow the Local Authority child protection and information sharing protocols.

3.10.3 Power considerations

BPS (2010) specifies the “respect for dignity and autonomy of persons” (p.8) as one of the core principles of ethical research. This principle becomes the key when conducting research with vulnerable families who might feel particularly disempowered in their relationships with the researcher (Gorin et al., 2008). In order to preserve participants’ dignity and autonomy the following steps were taken:

- Participants were informed in writing about their right to withdraw; they were further reminded of their right to skip any questions at the beginning of each interview.
- The researcher paid attention to non-verbal cues and regularly checked with the participants how they were finding the process.

- Participants were given a choice of locations for the interview and often preferred to meet at home (for parent sample), and in school (for teacher sample) in their comfortable and familiar environment.

3.10.4 Professionalism and deficit-based narratives

The author recognised the existence of deficit-based narratives that often develop amongst parents and teachers when they experience difficulties in collaboration with each other (e.g. “parent in denial” or “defensive teacher”, see sections 1.4. and 2.3. for discussion). These narratives could be disempowering and often detrimental for the relationships. Thus in order to follow the “Social responsibility” and “Maximising benefit and minimising harm” principles set out by the BPS (2010, p.10 and p.11), the following measures were taken:

- The use of any deficit-based labels in relation to either parents or professionals was carefully avoided.
- A respectful and neutral professional position was maintained when participants commented on the professional or personal qualities of other participants.
- The feedback stage was incorporated into the research design to encourage reflection and promote collaboration.
- Sometimes, providing it was not detrimental to the data, the author attempted to reframe some of the deficit narratives expressed by the participants (e.g. reframe “parent who does not do any homework with the child” as “parent who has different priorities”).

3.10.5 Duty of care

When working with parents, particularly those who found collaboration with school difficult, every attempt was made to direct them to services that could

help them to get the right support for their child. Every participant was given a list of useful resources at the end of the second interview which in some cases was adapted to match specific enquiries from the parent (see Appendix 5).

3.10.6 Researcher's safety

In order to ensure the researcher's safety, the Local Authority lone working procedures were followed and another member of the team was informed of the timings and locations of home visits.

3.11. Chapter summary

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the relatively complex methodological design adopted for the research. It strived to make this explanation as structured and transparent as possible in order to clarify how the research findings were obtained. The next chapter builds on this information and describes the research findings for each of the five research questions.

It was also hoped that the Methodology chapter could assist the reader in making an informed judgement on the strengths and weaknesses of the research which will be discussed again in the context of the research findings in the Discussion chapter.

Chapter Four: Research findings

4.1. Chapter overview

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis in relation to the five research questions. First, data related to participants' perspectives on collaboration (research question one) are described. Then, the findings feeding into the second research question concerned with the participants' values and beliefs will be outlined in detail. Finally, the last two sections, present the data related to the three research questions that explore the links between beliefs and collaboration.

Reflecting the female only gender composition of the parent sample, from this chapter onwards, "parents" will be normally described as "mothers" to avoid misleading generalisations to other carers (see Cole, 2007 for discussion).

To assist the reader, each section begins with the outline of the research question, highlighted in bold italic, and a brief overview of the types of data collected to answer this research question. Full transcripts of the focus groups and interviews can be found in Appendix 22.

4.2. Research question one

What do parents and teachers think are the signs of high and low quality collaboration?

Data for answering this question came from the focus groups where mothers and SENCOs discussed the signs of high and low quality collaboration (see Appendix 7 for the schedule). Twelve themes were identified through thematic analysis (see Table 4.1.) and were used as a basis for the Likert scale of perceived quality of collaboration (see Appendices 10.1 and 10.2). During the second round of thematic analysis, eight of the twelve themes have been

grouped into three broader, thematically distinct areas: resources; relationships; and agreement on the child's needs (see Fig. 4.1). The remaining four themes (feelings, conflict, the child, and school culture), while seeming important to the participants, seemed to be more peripheral in the discussion; they provided the context for other themes and interlinked them. In this section, overall differences and similarities between mothers' and SENCos' views will be discussed. Then the three thematic areas will be described in detail and the connections with the four peripheral themes will be highlighted.

4.2.1. Parent and SENCo groups: differences and similarities

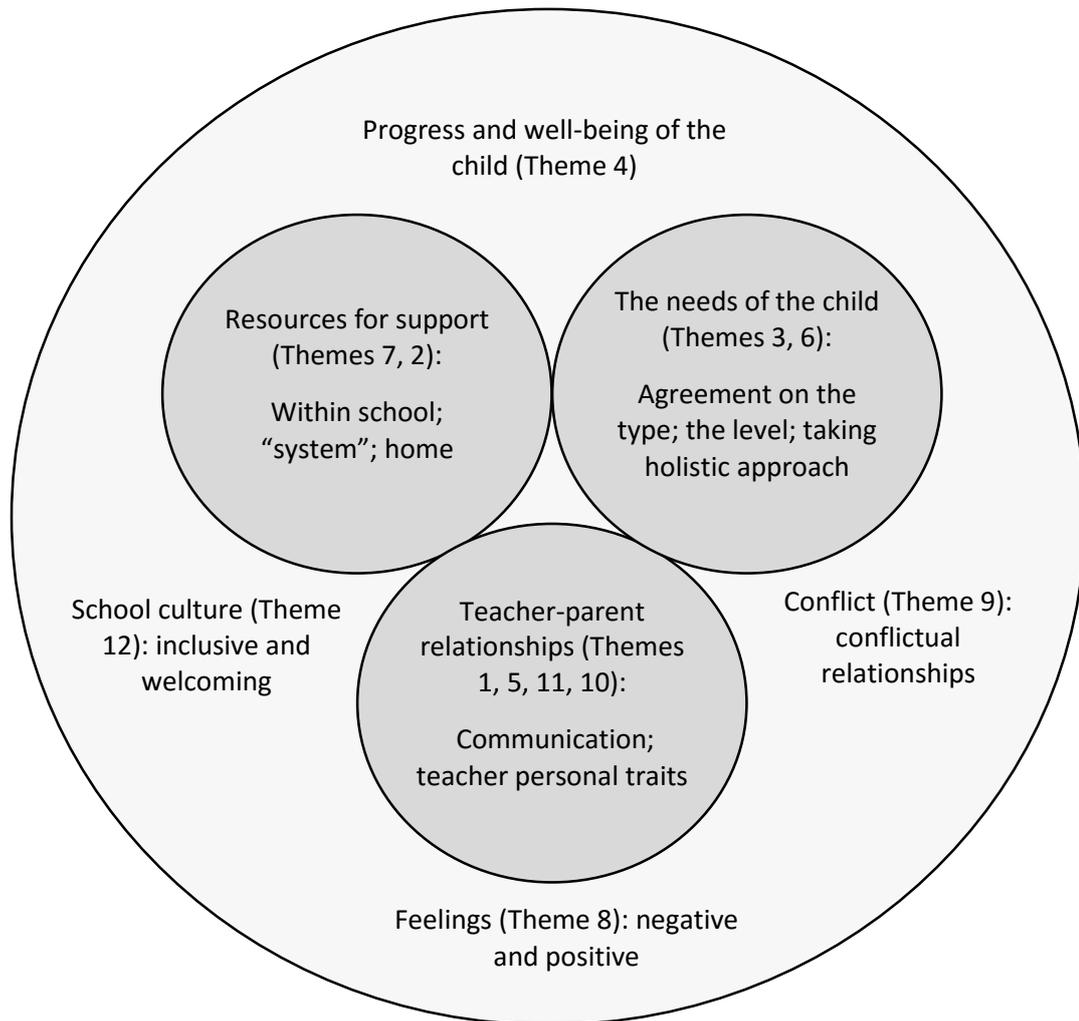
The topic of collaboration seemed to be important to both mothers and SENCos and stimulated rich discussions. The parent group tended to elaborate more on each topic than the SENCo group and as a result, their opinions dominate in the overall dataset.

Most of the twelve themes were considered similarly important by both groups. However, within each theme, parents and SENCos tended to adopt different perspectives, thus creating different subthemes (see Table 4.1).

Within some themes these differences were particularly noticeable. Thus, only mothers mentioned the importance of good SEND knowledge for the school staff (Theme 11) as well as the overall inclusive and welcoming school culture (Theme 12).

Parent 4: ... so Child 4, two years ago her teacher was a new teacher (...), straight out of teacher training, doing her first post-qualification year, haven't got the foggiest, just haven't got the foggiest, and I thought: thank god for these TAs, that are in the class, who do know, and they are teaching her how to teach SEN children. (Parent Focus Group, 430-433).

Figure 4.1. Quality indicators of collaboration: overall themes



Also, only mothers elaborated on the teacher’s skills and personal traits that make collaboration easier: good knowledge and understanding of the child; being passionate about working with SEN; feeling proud about child’s progress; nurturing the child as a parent would (Subthemes 5.1-5.4.).

At the same time, only SENCOs felt it is important for parents to regularly turn up to the meetings set up by the school (Subtheme 7.1). These and other differences in perspective will be further discussed in the following sections.

Table 4.1. Themes in participants' descriptions of quality collaboration

Themes	Subthemes	Prevalence:	
		SENCo	Parent
1. Opportunities for regular, open communication	1.1. Regular opportunities to discuss progress and troubleshoot	2	3
	1.2. Opportunities for parents to get to see child's school experiences	0	2
	1.3. Sharing information about crucial decisions and incidents	0	3
	1.4. Honest, open communication	3	3
	1.5. Well-coordinated communication between professionals	2	2
2. Coping with limited resources	2.1. Differences in expectations about the resources.	3	2
	2.2. Frustration with the system (that can't always be openly discussed)	2	3
	2.3. Extra effort and resource put in	1	3
3. Common understanding of the child's needs	3.1. School staff adopts a holistic approach: avoids generalisations on the basis of diagnosis, takes into account non-academic issues	2	4
	3.2. Dis/agreement about the level of child's need	1	2
	3.3. Dis/agreement about the type of support needed	1	1
4. Progress and well-being of the child	4.1. Child making progress	2	1
	4.2. Feeling happy	0	2
	4.3. Being involved	0	1
	4.4. Feeling confused	1	0
5. School staff showing passion and good knowledge of the child	5.1. S/he really knows and understands the child	1	3
	5.2. S/he is passionate about SEN	0	3
	5.3. S/he sees the potential in child, is proactive, determined, is proud of the child	0	3
	5.4. S/he nurtures the child	0	2
	5.5. Trust and good relationships with the staff, as opposed to confrontation	3	1
6. Parents feel that their opinion and expertise are valued		2	4
7. Collaboration – two way process: parental support at home	7.1. Parents coming into school for meetings, engaging in discussions	3	0
	7.2. Parents working towards agreed targets at home	3	3
	7.3. School adapting and recognising the pressure and stress that parents are under	2	4
8. Confrontational relationships: complaints and defensiveness	8.1. Legal attack	2	2
	8.2. Atmosphere of a battle: complaints and defensiveness	2	2
9. Feelings as indicators of collaboration	9.1. Positive: Happy, grateful	3	0
	9.2. Negative: hurt, defensive, frustrated, intimidated, nervous, and guilty	3	2
10. Supporting parents with information and empathy	10.1. with information and training	0	2
	10.2. emotionally	2	0

11. Trust to professional knowledge and experience of school		0	3
12. Inclusive and welcome school culture	12.1. Inclusiveness	0	3
	12.2. Making parents feel welcomed	0	3
	12.3. Ready to be flexible to suit the parents	0	3

4.2.2. Themes 2 and 7: coping with limited resources within the “system”, school, and home

This topic was widely discussed by both groups, reflecting everyone’s struggle to provide sufficient support within the context of limited resources. Participants noted that limited resources hamper the process of collaboration. Mothers often felt that the school needs to do more to help the child. When attempts to negotiate this help were not successful, some mothers felt that the only way ahead was to enter a confrontation with the school.

Parent 1: And so I have to be pushy, because otherwise he won’t get any help... you know they just don’t do anything, and of course this causes a really horrible atmosphere, because every time I go in they wonder what I am going to say, yea... (Parent Focus Group, 452-454).

In similar situations SENCoS talked about feeling blamed and needing to justify themselves. They felt hurt, vulnerable and pushed to be defensive by the parental “attack”.

SENCo 3: It’s a big hurt point because that thing about being defensive and having to be defensive from the time that child first almost arrived, and having been under attack. (SENCo Focus Group, 486-487).

To a lesser extent, both groups expressed empathy towards each other. The SENCo group said that sharing the frustration with parents about the “system” could be helpful but is not always possible:

SENCo 3: *I mean we've all got children that you know should get support but unfortunately because of financial restraints or cos they are not quite at that threshold they don't get any, which is really sad, isn't it.*

SENCo 1: *Yeah, that's really hard.*

SENCo 2: *And then you almost can't collaborate with the parents cos there isn't something actually you can do.*

SENCo 3: *Well, you share their frustration, don't you.*

SENCo 2: *Yeah, but you can't really share that with them because then that'll sound unprofessional as well. (SENCo Focus Group, 610-618).*

Parents expressed some understanding of the pressures that the teachers were under. They were very grateful to the teachers who put in extra time and efforts to support the child:

Parent 4: *I mean all the TAs I am sure are lovely, but there are the TAs that do their job and go home, and don't think about it till the next day, whereas Child 4's TA is so proactive, she will spend time at home preparing stuff for her, so that she has things she can access. (Parent Focus Group, 382-384).*

Parents recognized that they need to invest their time at home even though it is not always easy.

Parent 2: *well, to flip it round, I am aware that sometimes I am not helping the school that much. They have issues that they do not, that I don't think are that important, and I don't always bother too much (...), so they want me to try and train him, but I don't really have time for that and I don't think, but they would probably say: well, sometimes parents are not helping us... (Parent Focus Group, 771-777)*

Resources formed an important theme with regard to factors that the participants believed affect collaboration; thus this theme was linked to many other themes: e.g. positive and negative feelings towards each other (Theme 9), conflictual relationships (Theme 8), agreement on the level of child's

needs (Subtheme 3.2.), school staff's availability for regular communication (and Subtheme 1.1.).

4.2.3. Themes 1, 5, 10 and 11: teachers' personal traits and skills and building relationships through communication

Participants noted that having regular opportunities to share information and jointly problem-solve (Subtheme 1.1) was crucial for good collaboration:

Parent 2: ...like a, my son's teacher a few years ago, she wanted him to practice his hand up (...). So she started like finding a way (...) for him to pick up something when he wanted to, but then he fiddled with that, so she was all the time like, kind of looking for solution and communicating it to you. And then I could actually say: ye, my idea would be that you could try this and they would be like, ok, we'll give it a go. (Parent Focus Group, 700-706).

All the participants also emphasized the damaging effect of not being open and honest with each other (Subtheme 1.3):

SENCo 3: What's harder is when they [parents] can sort of sit there and nod and say all the right things in meeting... and then the next day the child comes in and, you know, says: "well actually..."
SENCo 2: "...Mum is really fed up with the school", [laughter], that's what I get. (SENCo Focus Group, 306-309).

For mothers, the lack of open communication was strongly linked with their perceptions of the whole school culture being closed and not welcoming to parents (Theme 12):

Parent 3: ye, they basically whitewashed it, they whitewashed it by getting me to meet with the Head of Governors, she said "oh, ye, ye, I know what you are talking about, we are going to do this" and then

shut it down and I just feel like they intimidate people into not complaining. (Parent Focus Group, 857-859).

Mothers also emphasised the importance of two specific types of communication: being informed about important decisions and incidents; and having an insight into their child's experiences in school (Subtheme 1.2). It felt as if parents entrusted the school with their child and needed this communication to feel reassured that their child was supported well in school.

Parent 4: TA who highlighted that she was concerned that Child 4 was being put into the side room and just left to get on with it. So, I was quite upset obviously about that, but was even more upset about the fact that if she wouldn't have told me this, I would not have known, and Child 4 would have carried on going into this room on her own... (Parent Focus Group, 718-721).

Parents also described attitudes and personal traits of the teacher that help develop trust towards the school (Theme 5): good knowledge of their child; caring for the child; and even nurturing the child as a parent would.

Parent 3: ...maybe a silly one, but when your child comes home and you can feel the perfume in his hair and you know that someone must have been hugging him, and you know that they love him and they have been really looking after him. (...) ye, you know they've been looked after and kind of, although it's not strictly collaboration, but they have been taking on your role, weren't they. (Parent Focus Group, 654-660).

It seemed to be very important for the parents to trust the SEND expertise of the school staff (Theme 11). Parents spoke highly of those teachers who were passionate about SEND in general and about their child in particular:

Parent 4: some of them [teachers] are very sensitive to the kids, and they are lovely, they are nice people, they look after the children very well, it's not the same as seeing a potential in the child and thinking, actually, this child is really capable, and can actually do quite a lot.

Rather than assuming: this child can't see and she is really autistic, so we just shove her over there and let her be autistic in the corner for the day, because actually she will be quite happy doing that but it is not very good for her. (Parent Focus Group, 397-402).

The SENCo group also recognized the crucial importance of having good relationships with parents; however they did not elaborate on what makes this relationship work and tended to use more general terms like “having the trust”, “being comfortable with someone”, and “being proactive”.

Overall, regular and honest communication was recognised as highly important for good collaboration. As part of this, mothers emphasised their need to know about the child’s experiences, particularly the most important ones. While both groups recognised that certain teachers are better at communicating with parents, mothers elaborated on this theme more than the SENCos. They specified that it is the understanding and caring approach towards the child, as well as being passionate and knowledgeable about SEND, that makes collaboration with a teacher easier for them.

4.2.4. Themes 3 and 6: Understanding the needs of the child and valuing parental opinion

The participants agreed that high quality collaboration requires a shared understanding of the child’s needs: the level, and the way to meet them. For example, both groups found it difficult when the other party, be it a parent or a teacher, did not recognise the needs of the child.

SENCo 2: ...if parents don't want to for whatever reason they are not willing to...

SENCo 1: Label?

SENCo 2: Yes, or just identify, that their child has got special needs, it might not cos they've got special needs, it might just be that they just don't want that label or they've got to, and I think for some parents

they have to go through like a bereavement that their child isn't normal... (SENCo Focus Group, 555-559).

While both groups mentioned that parental input into understating the child's needs is valuable, their reasons for this differed. SENCos often felt that giving parents a chance to contribute makes them feel recognised and more willing to collaborate with the school: a useful, but not essential, addition to normal school SEND processes:

SENCo 1: ...so then the parents come in and in an ideal world, and it did happen this week, the IEP's written with the parents... and the child also could be involved, but this child in particular, it wouldn't benefit him at all to be involved... and, so they wrote the objectives. She obviously, the class teacher, knew what she wanted to go in, and the parent agreed and supported, but then asked for an extra one to be put in at the end of the process, so that was quite nice to be able to do that for her really. (SENCo Focus Group, 56-63).

At the same time, parents felt very strongly that the teachers don't always have a good enough knowledge of the child and his/her needs; and that parents are the real experts who need to train the staff on their child's needs.

Parent 3: while they should be treating this parent as an expert because they know the child and they know the unique set of conditions and characteristics of that child, because conditions, not just autism, but autism is a prime example, but most conditions are a spectrum with variations, Down syndrome is not just one; but they tend to kind of think they know it all and there is not a budget or the willingness to have lot of training. Where there should really be taking training specific to each child and this should probably really be led by the parent! (Parent Focus Group, 302-307).

On the other hand, parents expressed trust and gratitude towards teachers who they felt really got to know their child as a person, their needs, and the way to meet them. Parents were keen to learn more about how to help the child from professionals who they felt had this level of understanding and expertise.

Agreement about the needs of the child and the place of parental opinion in this process present another area where teachers' and mothers' perspectives significantly differed. There seemed to be a tension between SENCos feeling in charge of the SEND provision in their schools, and mothers (particularly in situations of disagreement and mistrust towards the school) feeling that they have the understanding of the child that is needed to put effective support systems in place.

4.3. Research question two

What are the beliefs and values held by parents and teachers about parenting and education?

Participant's beliefs about parenting and education were explored using Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) and semi-structured interview. Overall, participants found RGT to be an unusual and sometimes cognitively challenging exercise (see section 5.6.2 for discussion), however it helped to elicit a wide range of beliefs, some of which were given high personal importance and thus could be described as values.

In this section, beliefs about parenting and education will be described separately. To assist the reader, the data is presented in two forms. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 summarise the themes identified through thematic analysis. They show a positive and negative polarity for each theme in line with the personal construct approach. The tables also illustrate the comparative prevalence of each theme amongst mothers and teachers. Pictures 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the results of the second round of thematic analysis, whereby individual themes were grouped into broader thematic areas; and common higher-order values were identified in line with the personal construct view of hierarchical relationships between personal constructs.

4.3.1. Beliefs about parenting

This section describes each of the four thematic areas (see picture 4.2): success in life and education; relationships with the child; boundaries and behaviour; parent character and circumstances.

Themes 2, 3, 4 and 7: Relationships with the child

The importance of spending time with children was one of the most prevalent themes amongst both mothers and teachers. Teachers tended to take a more educational perspective and spoke predominantly about educational activities (thus creating links with Theme 14 – supporting the school):

Teacher 1: Yes, so, these particular parents had a concern about their child to do with their maths, they came and spoke to me and then they took it away, and it was all done in a fun way so the child didn't know they were learning...but it's what they needed if that makes sense. (Parenting interview, 146-149).

At the same time, mothers rarely spoke about educational activities at home; instead they thought that it is important to take children on outings, play with them and just spend time together:

Parent 7: But at the same time he's very loving and very playful with them, and he will take them places and build things for them and, you know, he's a really nice dad... (Parenting interview, 142-144).

For most mothers spending time with the child was about strengthening the bond (Theme 3):

Parent 5: I think it's spending quality time helps, well not establish just a bond between us and obviously my husband because he's obviously at work all day, but between us all together, we sort of learn a little bit more about each other the more we spend time with each other doing stuff. (Parenting interview, 573-576).

Table 4.2. Parents' and teachers' beliefs about parenting

The length of each bar indicates the prevalence and significance of the theme.

TEACHERS	PARENTS
1. Boundaries and behaviour expectations	
+ boundaries (flexible); high behaviour expectations; positive role models - no boundaries; bad role models; low expectations	+ firm boundaries, strictness, respect, rules - laid back, flexible, lenient, doting on the child
2. Involved parents – spending time with children	
+ educational activities, help H/W. - “Stuck in front of TV”	+ playing, outings as a family, doing chores together - not giving children their time, being distant
3. Relationships and bond with the child	
+ developing bond, being “there for you”. - no interaction, no bond	+ relationships, bond, family-team, “there for you” - distant, separate, bad relationships, not supportive
4. Parents interested, talking with the child	
+ asking about feelings, experiences - not engaged, not there, no time	+ helping to share issues, taking it seriously - no time, child feeling awkward to talk
5. Patient parenting	
+relaxed: let’s discuss it -hard: do as I say	+ patience, talking things through - no patience, aggressive shouting, negativity
6. Father and mother roles, partnership	
+ partnership; equal roles - inconsistent, or unequal	+ partnership; equal roles / having both male and female role models - arguing in front of kids; no father
7. Knowing the child’s “ins and outs”	
+ good knowledge of child’s personality, their background (if adopted) - not knowing, not having detailed knowledge	
8. Helping the child to grow up secure and confident	
+ confidence to be themselves; secure boundaries; help to be happy in school - not caring, not giving boundaries	Emotional closeness
9. Supervising (controlling) but promoting independence	
+ balance between supervising and giving independence - too much / little supervision	+ babying - allowing to grow up
10. Helping child to become a good citizen	
+ good boundaries, manners, respect: fitting into the society; making good society for the future - not fitting in, feeling insecure	

11. Structure in parenting

Structured parenting	+ organised person, planning ahead - going with the flow, spontaneous
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12. Supporting children to achieve

- + planning ahead, high aspirations
- "coasting"/ too much pressure, aspirations too high/low

13. Stress levels

- + laid back, relaxed, chilling
- stressed, worried

14. Parents supporting school in their targets

- + home - continuation of school education. Not blaming school
- "home is home", no home learning, blaming school

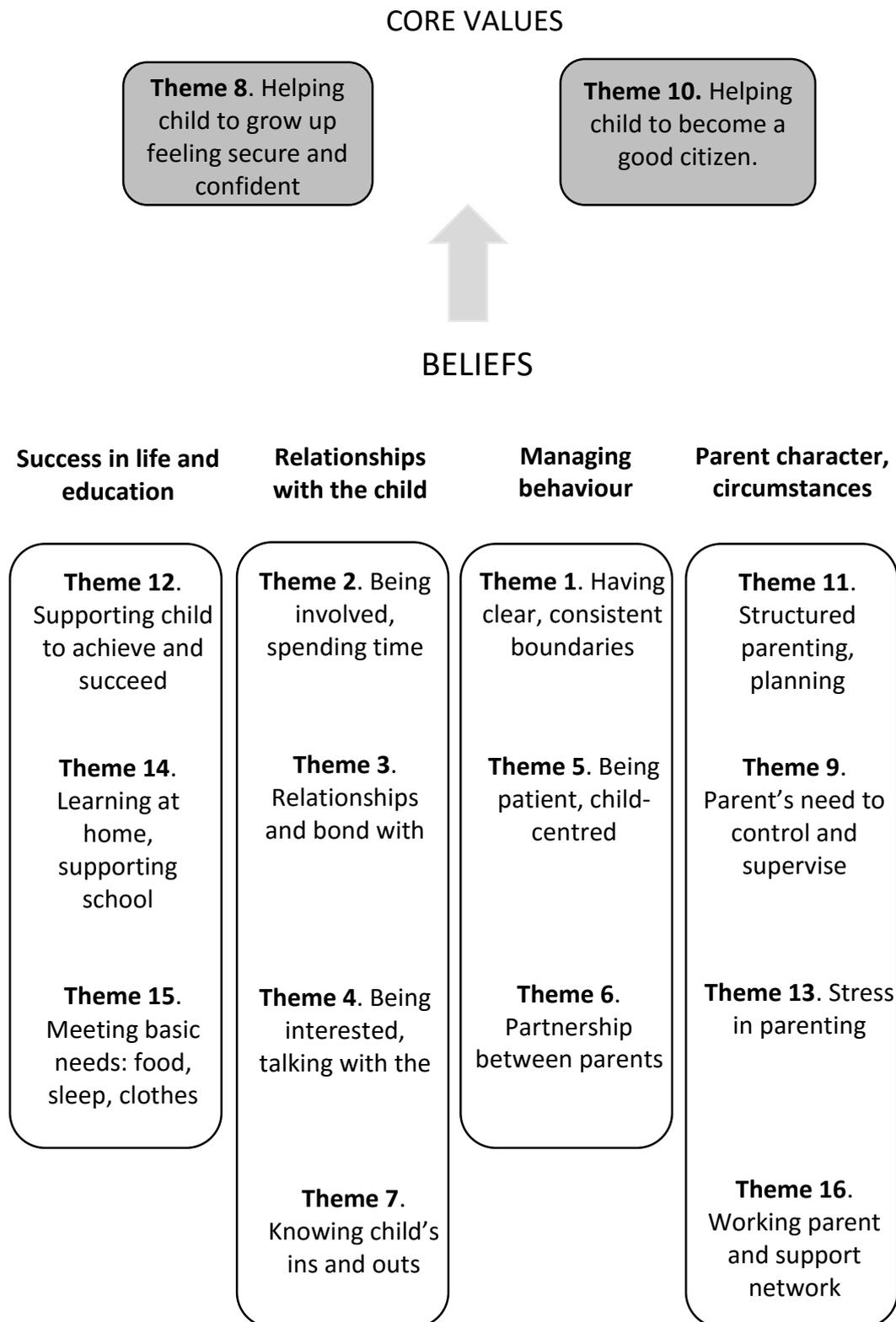
15. Basic care needs

- + ensuring sleep, food, cleanliness
- not enough of the above

16. Working parent and support network

- +juggling work/kids, hard
- flexible, no demands

Figure 4.2: Hierarchical structure and thematic areas in beliefs about parenting



Mothers also believed that quality time together helps to know the child's "ins and outs" (Theme 7) as well as to show the child that they are interested in their life and experiences (Theme 4). Many mothers believed that the latter would give the child confidence to tell them about their problems thus giving the family a chance to help them, particularly when they are teenagers (Theme 9).

Parent 6: *...but it [spending time together] just...makes you relationship so much better. Between you and your children. If you don't talk to each other, then they're not gonna come to you and talk to you and they're not gonna, you know, bother to come to you with their problems and things like that, so I do try my hardest to do that [spend time together] for my children in a way.* (Parenting interview, 407-414).

For some participants, all of the above was a means to an end of ensuring that the child feels emotionally secure within the family and confident in him/herself (Theme 8):

Researcher: *...why is it important for them to feel that they have it [love, relationships]?*

SENCo 2: *For security. (...) And to know that whatever is going on outside in the world, that there's always somewhere they can come back to and they're loved just because of who they are and not for what they've done and things.* (Interview 1, 391-398).

Others said that relationship with the child is a reward in its own right, something that they really value in their family:

Parent 7: *(...) but it [good relationships] hits back to you, doesn't it, 'cos if you feel like you've got a really good relationship with your child and that you're close to them, it's sort of a reward for you as well.* (Parenting interview, 624-626).

Both, mothers and teachers, described the opposite to being involved as being distant, not there for the child, not interested or able to create the time, or having bad relationships – considered as being undesirable or even damaging.

Researcher: *What would be the opposite to that, you would say, opposite to parents who are involved and know what their children are doing?*

SENCo 1: *Well, parents who are not engaged at all with their children. Which is incredibly damaging. Long term. (Parenting interview, 473-477).*

Additionally, teachers thought that not supporting children at home with their education leads to poor progress in school and ultimately poor educational outcomes.

Thus, all the participants agreed that spending time with the child is a crucial aspect of parenting and often saw it as a way of ensuring the child's emotional security. At the same time, mothers and teachers tended to focus on different forms of time with children and expressed different core values in relation to it. Thus, teachers saw it more as an important aspect of home education that leads to success in life; while mothers saw it more as a way of creating a close and supportive family unit.

Themes 1, 5 and 6: Managing behaviour

All of the participants felt that setting boundaries (Theme 1) is a very important aspect of parenting, and there were a lot of similarities between beliefs expressed by parents and teachers in this area. Participants varied somewhat in their views on how firm and consistent boundaries have to be; however, overall strict boundaries were preferred.

Some teachers saw the boundaries as a way of helping the child fit into the school life:

SENCo 2: *'Cause I think children need boundaries, they need to know where they... what they can and can't do. And if they have that, then they can transfer that knowledge over. I mean, children I see at school*

that don't have boundaries at home are normally naughty in school, and that's not doing them any good or... (Interview 1, 328-334).

At the same time, some parents viewed boundaries as a way to get the child to behave at home and to show respect.

Parent 6: Well, I would hope it actually gives you respect. Don't really get that much from Child 6, but I do from my daughter, so... but I think obviously Child 6 is that bit different, he's not really getting there at the minute but I do get it from my daughter and she helps out with things and you ask her to do something and she'll do it, and in fact Child 6 does to a certain extent as well... (Parenting interview, 422-425).

Many participants believed that clear boundaries help the child to feel secure in themselves and to grow up to be a good member of society (Themes 8 and 10).

Researcher: ...why do children generally, why do they need boundaries?

SENCo 2: Erm...because it helps them to fit into society, they feel safe with boundaries, they know where they stand with them, people like them if they stay within, you know, set boundaries. (Interview 1, 333-343).

Parents and some teachers mentioned that boundaries could be set in an authoritative "do as I say" way; or in a "let's discuss it" child-centred way. Many participants thought that it is important to be as patient and child-centred as possible (Theme 5), as it leads to better behaviour and relationships:

Parent 6: it's a big one [staying calm] as well, because being angry and shouting and being completely opposite to being calm doesn't do you any good when it comes to trying to get things out of your children, and trying to get them to do stuff and it doesn't work. It just really doesn't work, it just means that they're gonna shout back at you or they just get grumpy and cross and... (Parenting interview, 568-572).

Others suggested (or showed in their scores on repertory grids) that there needs to be a balance between being patient and strict:

Parent 7: She's not quite as soft on the children as this one... but she tries to sort of understand why children are doing something, rather than just sort of shout at them for doing something; she will shout at them, but she will try and work out why they did it, just try and stop them doing it again, that sort of thing. (Parenting interview, 176-180).

Partnership between parents (Theme 6) was often seen as a pre-requisite for consistency in boundaries, as well as a good model of relationships for the child. However, one single mother also spoke about the importance of giving the child different male and female role-models, so that the child has diverse perspectives. Thus, in her context she saw a positive side to the lack of consistency.

Teachers and parents varied more in the way they described the opposite of “parents who set consistent boundaries”. Teachers tended to use words such as “poor role-model for the child” and “having low expectations of behaviour”:

Teacher 1: thinking about expectations behaviour-wise, I would say, those two, their expectations are lower than this one. I would say this one would expect their child to behave in a certain way, be polite, all of those things, whereas I don't think it concerns these two as much. (Parenting interview, 96-100).

Parents preferred descriptions such as “being lenient”, “doting on the child” and “letting them to get away with murder”.

Parent 5: ...they'd [Parent 5's parents] let us get away with murder [laughter]. My mum and my sister they are sort of, yeah, let them get away with anything, do you know what I mean? 'Oh, we'll let them have sweets, it's alright', 'oh, let them go outside with no shoes on, they'll be fine' you know, it's just very, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen... (Parenting interview, 254-260).

Thus, overall managing behaviour through consistent boundaries seemed to be a belief of similar importance to all of the participants. Overall, mothers and teachers shared similar views on how boundaries are set and why they are needed. At the same time, differences in language used to describe parents who do not set boundaries for their children suggest that teachers tend to use more professional and deficit-based descriptions that involve some level of judgement. Mothers, on another hand, while disapproving of the lack of boundaries, tended to use more neutral, sympathetic and common-language based descriptions.

Themes 12, 14 and 15: Success in life and education

This area was particularly important for teachers: mothers did not mention this theme in their beliefs about parenting. Teachers valued setting appropriate expectations for the child that are neither too low, so that the child does not achieve; nor too high, so that the child feels under too much pressure:

SENCo 1: (...)when I reached the end of my A-levels my mum was absolutely crystal clear what I was going to do. (...) There was never the pressure put on the young people by H and J, but there was by my mum. (...) pressure to make a good impression, really. Whereas, where, of course, J and H obviously wanted good outcomes for their children. But it was within a far less oppressive regime [laughter].
(Parenting interview, 203-222).

Teachers also felt that it is important for parents to keep educating their child at home and to support the school in their targets. By this, some simply meant ensuring that the child is equipped for the day and helping them with their homework:

Teacher 2: Very supportive parents, help with her homework, help with her reading...

Researcher: (...) And what is opposite to that, how another one might be different?

Teacher 2: (...) *Erm, so parents that, opposite are parents that don't read with their children at home... (...) Don't read to their children, don't support their children, their homework.* (Parenting interview, 68-87).

Others suggested more sophisticated actions, such as monitoring the child's education and planning ahead to ensure that educational targets are met:

Teacher 1: ...*particularly this one [parent] would want to know where they [the child] should be at, to make sure they meet it. (...) And "how", and it's "how" we get to that point at the end of the year and they'll put all that in to place, to make sure they do.*

Researcher: *Yeah, yeah. And this one [parent] just...sort of thinking about "now", you said?*

Teacher 1: *Yeah, a bit more coasting rather than...I mean they'll do stuff, but...but they're pushing for a bit more.* (Parenting interview, 202-213).

It was important for teachers to ensure that the child progresses through school and gets onto a good path in life afterwards. As one teacher said when she was asked why it is important for her: "*because it's my job*" (Teacher 1, 437). She also noted that some parents seem to separate home from school and prefer education to stay in school; while other parents are much more willing to take education home:

Teacher 1: *I would say that this one's [a parent] more..."she's in school". (...) Doesn't matter... And I think they probably separate it a bit more...that's school, now we're home. (...) Whereas these ones I would say there's an extension to the day by doing homework and other things...* (Parenting interview, 171-177)

Some teachers also mentioned parental responsibility to provide food, sleep and general care as a way of supporting the child in school: making sure that they can learn and feel confident among their peers.

Thus, this group of themes was considered as an important aspect of parenting exclusively by the teachers. Mother's beliefs about education (see section 4.3.2) suggest that they were also concerned about the child's

progress through school and future success in life, but perhaps they did not directly associate it with the parenting process.

Themes 11, 9, 13 and 16: beliefs specific to parent characters and circumstances

Themes included in this thematic area represent beliefs that are diverse and specific to individual circumstances. Thus, when describing these beliefs, participants tended to link them to their (or their child's) individual characteristics and experiences, rather than to certain general parenting rules expected to be the same for everyone.

For example, many participants thought that it is very important to gradually give control away, as the child grows up, in order to promote the child's independence (Theme 9). At the same time, some of them reflected that because of their character as a parent, or their child's character, they preferred to stay in control and supervise the child for longer.

SENCo 2: You can tell I'm controlling [laughter] and dominant as a parent.

Researcher: Well, I felt, I felt that you have a lot...that you thought about it really carefully, have a lot of, like, structures, and...

SENCo 2: Yeah, I'm quite a structured person so I guess that's... well I'm also, my son needs definite boundaries, otherwise he'd be even more of a nightmare than he already is so that's why I had to put them in. Whereas my daughter doesn't really need that many boundaries, 'cause she just stays within them. (Interview 2, 93-101).

The theme of control was closely linked with the theme of structure and planning in parenting, such as planning the day ahead (Theme 11), which participants also explained by their own preferences or the need of their child:

Parent 5: Yeah, Child 5 likes to have rules and structure. If there's rules and structure are in place then we can, work with it. If there isn't, she

goes a bit hay wild, erm, so if there's structure, being strict with the structure, like we've got to get dressed before we have breakfast, if we're not, she just doesn't know whether she's coming or going, and if we don't tell her she's got to get dressed before she has breakfast, then she'll just come downstairs and be like, not too sure, eat breakfast and then go.... quite naughty in a way. (Parenting interview, 665-670).

The theme of stress (Theme 13) was also often described as a personal trait. Participants described parents who tend to be anxious about decisions or rushed in their approach as opposed to laid-back parents. Being stressed as a parent was not normally given any strong positive or negative judgments or extreme scores on the repertory grids:

SENCo 2: Probably, those two are very laid back, and don't worry much about things, whereas this one worries about what decision she's made or... (Interview 1, 91-92).

Finally, two participants (both teacher-parents) touched on the impact that high work pressure has on parenting. While they said that it is hard to balance work and kids, they also felt that it is useful for children to grow up knowing they are not always at the centre of their parent's life:

SENCo 1: Well, since I'm a juggler [laughter]... Oh, I, juggling isn't good, it makes you feel guilty about everything, as you probably well know. But, I think it's important for children to know that there, there is a balance. (Parenting interview, 525-530).

Some aspects of parenting were only mentioned by one of the eight participants and hence were not included into the final thematic map. These included: religion; socialising; and level of physical contact (see Appendix 16, Theme 16). Nevertheless, participants who talked about these themes, described them as being important for them, which shows that despite many commonalities, there is a real diversity of parenting experiences.

4.3.2. Beliefs about education

This section describes each of the five thematic areas in beliefs about education (see picture 4.3): social situations in school; meeting child's needs; promoting independence; the process of learning; parent-school interactions.

Themes 2, 4, 5, 7 and 11: The process of learning

Beliefs related to the process of learning linked together 5 out of 15 themes, thus highlighting the importance of this aspect of schooling for mothers and teachers in equal measure. Many themes from this group were directly linked to the core value of ensuring a child's progress in school and future success in life (Theme 10), which was seen as the main purpose of being in school:

Parent 7: Well, I think the learning and education bit is the most important, because... (...) I mean that's what you go to school to do, isn't it, that's the whole point of being at school, is to become educated... (Education interview, 467-470).

The majority of the participants felt that the effectiveness of the learning process is linked with the enjoyment and interest in learning (Theme 2):

SENCo 1: Yeah, I mean, who couldn't, who could not be interested, I mean, it looks something like K Gardens [picture of a school trip]. Staring up at the most incredible plants and their, their faces are just lit aren't they... they are really interested in what they can see. And again, that will stay with them. (Education interview, 405-412).

Table 4.3. Parents' and teachers' beliefs about education.

The length of each bar indicates the prevalence and significance of the theme.

TEACHERS	PARENTS
1. Meeting individual needs	
+ teaching at the right level, meeting the need - not having resources; child not "suitable" for mainstream	+ knowing child's need and meeting it - blank approach, not knowing / noticing the need
2. Interest and enjoyment in learning	
+ Deep learning, intrigued children - bored, passive children, superficial learning	+ happy children, having fun in learning - confused, bored or passive children
3. Social time	
+ good time with friends; learning social skills - poor social skills; poor friendships; bullying	+ good time with friends - feeling lonely; behaving badly
4. Environment	
+ vibrant, tactile, educational, outdoor - blunt, not engaging, indoor	+ welcoming for children and warm - not welcoming, dull
5. Learning behaviour and time to rest	
+ focussed children - unfocussed children	+ good balance sitting in class and "getting energy time" - too much sitting in class, or bad behaviour in class
6. Resources	
+ resources (time / staff / outside agencies) to help learning - lack of adult / time resources	
7. Teacher- or peer-led learning	
+ peer learning: teacher – guide on the side - teacher learning: teacher – sage on the stage	Learning from friends or teacher (no + or -)
8. Promoting independence	
+ promoting independence - giving learning to children	+ independence in life choices - deciding for them
9. Teacher attitude and relationship with the child	
+ enthusiastic; valuing children - distanced	+ smiley, understanding, connected with children - stressed, snappy, negative
10. Making progress	
+ progress made; realistic expectations - not seeing progress	+ education to make a good start in life - not getting qualifications and good life chances

11. Learning styles are catered for

+ all learning styles catered	+ hands-on, interactive learning
- only auditory learning	- sit-and-listen learning

12. Involving parents in education

+ parents involved in lessons, help with HW, learning taken home	+ not too much HW, involved
- parents not involved, misunderstanding, no help with HW	- too much HW

13. Confident children

+ guided through material; proud	+ confident children
- confused/disengaged	- confused and withdrawn

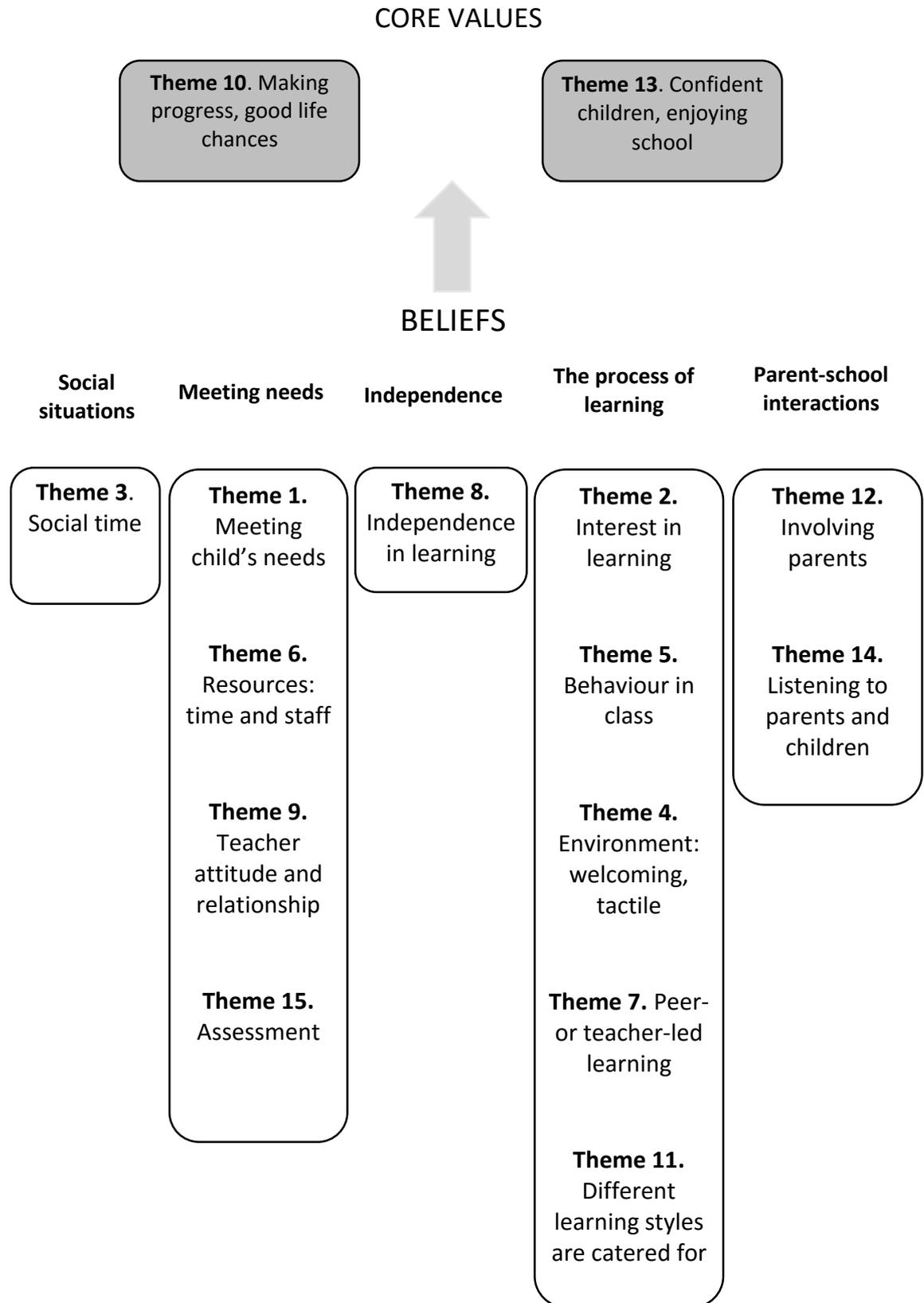
14. Relationships with parents

+ good rel-ps with parents	+ parent /child listened to
- not getting involved	- not listened to/not respected

15. Assessments

+ balance between summative/formative
- too much summative

Figure 4.3: Hierarchical structure and thematic areas in beliefs about education



Teachers and parents had similar ideas about what makes learning interesting and often attributed it to outdoor environment; interactive and creativity-based experiences (Themes 4 and 11). At the same time, indoor, “sit-and-listen” approaches were generally described in negative terms as leading to boredom and brain fatigue:

Parent 7: They look like they are just sitting there, just listening to...can you imagine a teacher just groaning on... and they're thinking, 'what time is break?' (Education interview, 174-175).

Despite ascribing positive attributes to interactive and outdoor learning, many participants gave these constructs moderate ratings on their repertory grids, explaining that all learning cannot be like this and there should be a balance between interactive and “sit-and-listen” approaches. Mothers in particular attributed high importance to the ability of their children to display good learning behaviour: comply, stay focussed and listen to the teacher (Theme 5):

Parent 6: Yeah, definitely, I believe that children should be at school, they should be learning, they should be doing what they're told (...) at the end of the day they are there to learn, and they are there to not wander around in the classroom, stay in the classroom, and wait until they're able to go out playtime, you know. (Education interview, 208-213).

One mother did not mind the teacher shouting at her daughter if that was needed to get her to focus:

Parent 7: I basically said [to the teacher who snapped at the child], you know 'that's fine, I'm quite happy for you to shout at her if she's not doing', you know, she's just sitting and staring into space, by all means, shout at her. (Education interview, 593-595).

Many mothers felt that concentrating hard and listening is important for learning and making progress. Some mothers also felt that it reflects on them as parents:

Researcher: Right, and why is it important to you for him to be respectful [towards the teacher], so what is it about?

Parent 6: *Cos it says something about him, it just says that he's rude or disrespectful and people just tend to dislike him, and I don't want that for my son, er, and I just, and it says something about me as well at the end of the day, so am I teaching him to be like that, when I don't teach him to be like that, so it's very important to me, very much so.* (Education interview, 284-288).

Thus, mothers seemed to place the responsibility for good learning behaviour on the child and to some extent on themselves as parents. However, they also thought that in order to help children behave well during lessons, they need be given enough breaks to get their energy back and be free to choose what to do.

Interestingly, teachers did not speak much about behaviour in class. It seemed as if they saw it as their basic responsibility to help children to focus and engage in learning. They spoke about using interactive resources and exciting experiences as a way to ensure children are focussed and engrossed in learning, thus putting the emphasis on promoting the interest in learning rather than the good behaviour in class:

Teacher 1: *She's very much a tactile learner, she learns by doing very much so, and having those resources, whether it be you know, some handwriting resource, whether it be some reading resource, you know, she needs that to help her focus. And while using those resources, doing that stuff, she doesn't know she's learning while she's doing it.*

(Education interview, 470-477).

Another aspect of learning frequently mentioned by the participants was peer- or teacher-led learning (Theme 7). Mothers mostly felt that there should be a balance between the two types of learning and that children should not be talking too much to each other, as this could lead to poor learning behaviour:

Parent 8: *...so if you want the children to talk to each other, but you don't want them to talk to each other so much so that they are not gonna listen to the teacher there...* (Education interview, 481-482).

At the same time, teachers tended to value peer-led learning as an effective learning technique:

Teacher 1: ... *And that's [peer learning] basically, that peer and that using that child that knows what they're talking about because they've been taught by an adult, so then pass it on to another child, whether that be another age group, or whether it's the same age group. So using them as the expert rather than adult as an expert. (...) and I've used it all across the board: it may be a special needs child, maybe, you know, extension child. But it doesn't matter because, they are an expert in that field, that area, doesn't matter who it is.* (Education interview, 308-328).

To summarise, all participants believed that an effective learning process lies at the heart of good education as it leads to progress and future success in life. However, there were some differences between mothers and teachers in what they believed made learning effective. Mothers tended to put more emphasis on good behaviour in class: listening well, not talking to other children or moving around, focussing on learning. At the same time, teachers emphasised the importance of engaging, interactive, peer-led learning that promotes children's interest and helps them learn without getting bored and tired.

Themes 1, 6, 9 and 15: Meeting individual needs

Meeting individual needs (Theme 1) was a very important aspect of education for many participants. At the same time, mothers and teachers differed in their perspectives on the topic. For mothers it was important to ensure that teachers know their child well and recognise their needs:

Parent 8: *I do feel, like, the school needs to take on board every person's different and everybody's learning ability is different, and when you've got the quiet one's sat there just listening and taking it all in, they just assume that they know what they're doing, because in fact they could be quite shy and not understand what they're supposed to do, and that's not gonna help them in the long run because they're just going to be in a*

cloud for their childhood without understanding what they are supposed to do... (Education interview, 409-414).

Mothers also felt that a friendly and positive approach from the teacher (Theme 9) is important to ensure that the child is understood and supported, enjoys school and feels confident at learning (Theme 13):

Parent 7: 'Cos I think really the attitude of the teacher can affect the whole class, can't it. (...) We've been saying about places being warm and welcoming or whatever. It doesn't really matter if the teacher doesn't radiate something out to the class... (Education interview, 288-292).

Teachers, on the other hand, tended to focus on assessing children's academic levels (Theme 15) in order to help them differentiate and make learning appropriate for each individual child (Theme 10):

SENCo 1: With this one, wherever the child is starting from, or a young person starting from, that's where their learning is stemming from. Whereas here, there's an expectation that they'll all be at the same level. And unless every child's starting point is recognized, the learning is not going to be as effective. There are going to be either gaps or they're going to be covering ground they already know. So to maximize the use of their time, you have to know where they're starting off from. (Education interview, 481-491).

Some teachers spoke about the importance of realistic expectations and felt pressurised by Ofsted to ensure certain level of progress for all children, which they felt was not helpful for meeting children's needs:

SENCo 2: I think it's about they [Ofsted] want all the children to make progress every single year and they want everyone to make the expected progress, and actually, and that's even worse now, 'cause it's not even about progress, is it, it's about them wanting all the children to be at their own year group level and things. And especially the special needs children, that isn't gonna be the case. (Interview 1, 726-730).

Teachers and, to a lesser extent, parents highlighted the importance of having sufficient resources for meeting children's diverse needs (Theme 6): e.g. time; interactive materials; and opportunities for small group teaching:

SENCo 2: I think if they [small groups] are taught properly, then they, children are given more attention, you can really crack down on what the child is learning, you can kind of group children with the same learning issues or needs and things, so you can really target those issues, and move at their paces (Interview 2, 269-272).

Teachers believed that small group teaching helps to appropriately differentiate learning. At the same time, mothers seemed to be more concerned with the lack of confidence experienced by some children in larger classes (Theme 13):

Parent 8: OK, they're similar because again one teacher is communicating with just one or two students, so, they're going to be able to...the students are going to be able to understand what's...what the teacher is explaining to them. They are going to feel more confident, they're all going to feel happier because it is one teacher per one or two students. (Education interview, 196-199).

Participants also described situations where they felt that sufficient resources cannot be provided due to intrinsic constraints of the school environment, thus expressing a degree of hopelessness about what school can realistically do to meet the needs of the child:

Parent 6: ...I think if they actually gave him time, which I've been saying to them for ages, just to calm down and you know, sort things out, but they don't, because it's the school environment, and I do understand them quite a lot of time, and they've got a lot of other children to sort out and educate and things like that, but at the same time, he does need that time. (Education interview, 351-356).

With a similar sense of giving up, one SENCo expressed frustration with the lack of support from external agencies and lack of good specialist provision that would be more suitable for children whose needs she felt could not be met in

mainstream school. She felt that it is wrong to expect the school to meet the need of all children:

SENCo 2: Because also, yea, I mean, obviously, all you want all children to make progress, but some children with their special needs are not going to make...hardly any progress, are they? But then I don't think they should be mainstream school, but they are, because if...what level would you have to be now to [get a special school place]... (Interview 1, 791-799).

Overall, all the participants believed that it is very important for the school to meet the needs of individual children. As part of this, teachers tended to focus more on the technicalities of assessment and differentiation, while mothers mentioned the importance of teacher's understanding of the children and their attitude towards them. Many participants felt that limitations in resources and constraints of the school and LA systems make meeting individual needs more difficult.

Themes 12 and 14: Parent-school interactions

In their comments about parent-school interactions, teachers tended to focus more on involving parents in education (Theme 12); while for mothers maintaining good relationships with the school staff seemed to be more important (Theme 14).

Teachers saw the purpose of involving parents in education as a way to support children's progress and "take learning home":

SENCo 1: If he [a father] is not doing it himself, it looks like he's with that little person, he's right next to him, so he's actively involved with him, and the, well they can talk about afterwards, it's huge, and so the learning can ease on, even just through re-revisiting what they've been doing (Education interview, 341-343).

Some teachers felt particularly strongly that parents need to support children with their learning:

Teacher 1: *I mean I suppose the only thing I perceive [to be different between her and parent 5] is just the fact that they don't do enough at home, so I just don't feel she places the importance of...she'll say she does, but I'm not sure she... [...] because she doesn't do it.* (Education interview, 529-234).

Interestingly, this particular mother had a different perspective on the place of homework in her child's life:

Parent 5: *I do think homework starts too young, I must admit. Child 5 had homework when she was in Reception. And I think reception year and year one, I think is too young for homework. [...] You don't want them to start working too hard at home before they grow up, so to speak.* (Education interview, 395-412).

Other parents did not mention home learning in relation to education. Instead, mothers who had experiences of disagreement with the school focused on the issue of relationships between parents and school staff. These mothers felt strongly they would like to be more respected by the school staff and for the school to be easier to communicate with. They expressed a sense of injustice, frustration and hopelessness about the way the school responded to the child and to parental requests for support.

Parent 6: *They don't do what I believe is important for Child 6, they heard what I had to say and I got a letter back saying that they've done that, this happened, that happened, and I was like, well, I'm not fighting that battle because it's our word against theirs so I just, I give up.* (Education interview, 395-397).

One of the SENCOs also felt strongly about the need to support relationships with parents and saw it as one of her main areas of responsibility:

SENCO 1: *...even though I have tried really hard, and I think all schools do, some teachers don't get as involved with parents as others. But what*

I've maintained all the time that I've been SENCo is quite a good relationship with the parents of the children that I'm trying to help, either through e-mail if, I mean, I had lots of e-mails yesterday from a parent, or face to face, I talked to a parent this morning... Just having that link I think gives parents confidence in the school, even if I'm not the class teacher, they think somebody's taking an interest, which I genuinely am. (Education interview, 720-726).

Overall, teachers placed much greater importance on home-based educational activities than mothers did, with one of the mothers feeling strongly that there should be no learning at home for very young children. The issues of respect and communication between parents and school staff, on the other hand, seemed to be more potent for mothers who have experienced confrontations with the school.

Theme 3: Social situations

Social time and friendships (Theme 3) were mentioned by all of the participants, many of whom thought it was an important aspect of school life or even something that predetermines children's enjoyment of the school (Theme 13):

SENCo 2: And I think if they enjoyed coming to school 'cause they've got friends... Then they'll want to keep coming, actually, for them learning is secondary, it's about seeing their friends really, isn't it? (Interview 1, 865-870).

At the same time, the participants did not tend to elaborate on this topic; subsequently, this theme appeared to be isolated from the others.

Some mothers described social situations as positive experiences for their children where they have fun with their friends:

Parent 7: they may be mixing with the students that aren't in their year, older or younger students all pleasantly sort of mixing together...you would like to think anyway. (Education interview, 84-85).

Other mothers were worried about isolation, bullying or loneliness, which they felt can be associated with behaviour problems during social times:

Parent 6: (...) *if he's, doesn't respect people and people won't respect him back, or people will dislike him, and then, you know, nobody will like him, and he won't get no friends that way.* (Education interview, 293-295).

Teachers tended to see social time more as an opportunity to develop social skills both in an informal way and, if necessary, in a formal adult-guided way:

T1: (...) *whereas you've got like, the free play, but they are still learning social skills, but you also have times when you're learning social skills in a formal setting, 'cause there might be children that struggle within that social setting to operate on their own, so then you're pulling them out, showing them how to.* (Education interview, 331-335).

Some teachers also commented that poor behaviour makes life in school very stressful, potentially leading to exclusions and consideration of an alternative placement.

SENCo 1: *Well, for some children, they can be withdrawn at social times and others become over, um, excitable, [laughter]. Or can try to be in control. Which is highly stressful for everybody actually, so it's stressful for them, it's stressful for staff and for the other children. It has big negative impact, which then carries on later on into the day so...* (Education interview, 213-221).

It is interesting to note how little overall attention the participants gave to the topic of social time and friendships – the aspect of schooling that some of them believed to be the most important for the children.

Theme 8: Promoting independence

Finally, the theme of promoting children's independence and ability to make free choices (Theme 8) was mentioned as important by several participants.

Mothers thought that the ability to make independent choices was an important set of skills for children's future safety:

Parent 5: *I like to think when she gets older, she's gonna have to make her own decisions, so she's gonna have to start early. (...) I don't want that [free choice in school] taken away from her because that means I just worry if it's taken away from her and someone says, let's go do this, she hasn't been given a choice, she's just gonna go and do it.* (Education interview, 598-611).

While teachers valued providing children with free choices, they did not tend to elaborate on the topic as much as parents did. Only one teacher explained that independence in learning is important as it helps the teacher to manage a large class (thus linking it with resources, Theme 6):

Teacher 2: *...So it's teaching those skills to be independent, because obviously there only possibly one, two adults in a classroom, so it's helping the children when they haven't got the adult's support in order for them not to then keep interrupting or need an adult.* (Education interview, 311-314).

Thus, promoting independence formed a relatively small theme among participants' educational beliefs. Parents spoke about the importance of independence more clearly, linking it with children's ability to learn how to make good choices and negotiate difficult situations.

4.4 Research questions three and four

What are the perceived differences and similarities between teachers and parents in the beliefs they hold about parenting and education?

How do participants see the role of values and beliefs in parent-school collaboration?

Data for these research questions was gathered at the end of each interview when participants were asked: (1) to imagine what the other person in their

parent-teacher dyad might think is important in parenting or education; (2) to score the constructs in their repertory grid on the element “ideal school / parent as seen by the other”; and (3) whether they thought their beliefs played a role in the process of collaboration with that person (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 for interview schedule).

Participants found these questions quite difficult and commented that it was an unfamiliar and quite abstract way of thinking. Some participants felt that they didn't have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the other person to give an answer. Since these questions were the last in the interview, there was not enough time to help the participants to explore these complex issues and get a good understanding of their perspectives and experiences. As a result, the data lacked in credibility – a pitfall that, unfortunately, was not identified at the pilot stage of the research (see section 5.6 for discussion).

This methodological limitation made it impossible to carry out a detailed step-by-step thematic analysis of the data without compromising on the credibility of the findings. However, data gathered for both research questions contained enough information to allow identification of some major patterns that are presented in this section.

4.4.1. Research question three: perceived differences and similarities between the teachers and parents

Three types of data contributed to this research question. (1) the similarity scores for parent and teacher dyads; (see section 3.7.3. and Table 4.5); 2) the participants' comments on whether they felt different or similar to the other (Table 4.5); 3) the descriptions of the personal constructs where participants rated themselves as different from the other person in the repertory grids (Table 4.4). Having three types of data allowed some triangulation, thus improving the credibility of the findings. As a result of the analysis, four themes were identified.

Theme 1. Parents and teachers feeling similar

Six out of eight participants commented that they felt similar to the other person in their dyad (see Table 4.4). Some participants thought that in fact all parents and teachers share similar ideals about parenting or education even though they might act on them differently.

SENCo 2: (...) I would say that the majority of parents would say 'well, yeah, we agree with you', even if they go back and do the opposite (...). They don't really disagree with me but they don't all...you know that they're not following through what you suggested or said. (Education interview, 501-511).

Furthermore, the similarity scores between the elements "ideal school/parent as seen by myself" and "seen by the other" were quite high (varying from 67% to 97%), thus indicating proximity of the elements (see Table 4.5).

Theme 2. Teachers: "parents value more formal learning approaches"

Analysis of personal constructs where participants identified themselves as different, suggests that teachers thought mothers might value more formal, adult-led, "sit-and-listen" learning approaches (see Table 4.4, Teacher 1 and SENCo 1). One teacher saw this difference as a result of parent's past educational experiences:

Teacher 1: I mean I suppose she's coming at it from a different angle as education has changed from when she was in school, and I suppose she feels she's done alright, but you know, that might be the right way of doing it. (Education interview, 408-410).

Table 4.4. Perceptions of differences between parents and teachers.

	Teacher's perceptions of differences:		Parent's perceptions of differences:	
	I think...	While the parent thinks...	I think...	While the teacher thinks...
Dyad 1 (SENCo1 – Parent 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to have high aspirations for children, support them to find a path in life but not put them under pressure. It is important to take a more relaxed approach to behaviour, be flexible and negotiate. It is important to ensure active, deep learning that stays for a long time. The teacher should be a “guide on the side” and collaboration between students is encouraged. It is important for staff to have lunch with kids (show interest, establish contact, role-model). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children sometimes need to be left to find their own way in life; important for children to make a good impression. It's OK to be more black-and-white, “explode” more quickly. Passive listening is also valuable, where teacher is the “sage on the stage” and students learn more on their own. children need more distance from the staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to give the child enough time to calm down or finish a task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That they need to “cram it all in”.
Dyad 2 (Teacher 1 - Parent 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to things at home to match the school curriculum; to plan ahead how to reach educational outcomes. outdoor learning is good. peer-led, “do and learn” approach is important, as well as lots of resources to stimulate learning in an exciting, tactile environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is less important to do educational activities at home; it's OK to “coast” – not plan ahead unless problems arise. outdoor learning – less important. it's OK to have some boring, teacher-led “look and learn” approach, using just white-board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's important not to give homework in Key Stage 1, so that kids can be kids at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some homework is important even at young age.

	Teacher's perceptions of differences:		Parent's perceptions of differences:	
	I think...	While the parent thinks...	I think...	While the teacher thinks...
Dyad 3 (SEnCo2 – Parent 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's important to give some freedom, and control them less when the child becomes a teenager. teaching children how to cope by exposing them to different difficult situations is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it's quite important to always know where the child is and what they are doing. it's more important to (over) protect the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it's very important for teachers to take on board that everyone is different and pay attention to details of different learning abilities; treat children as individuals. it's important for children to be questioned (and puzzled?). very important for teachers to be fun and happy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this is less important; it's OK if a quiet child just sits in their cloud. children need to be passively listening more. stressed and miserable teachers sometimes is OK.
			NO INFORMATION ON BELIEFS ABOUT PARENTING	
Dyad 4 (Teacher 2 – Parent 7)	NONE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there needs to be more outdoor learning: relaxed, with children participating. it is important for teachers to know the needs of the child; to help and to push. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there needs to be more "sit and watch" learning in class. sometimes it's OK to be sharp and not understand the need.

Table 4.5. Similarity scores* and perceptions of difference

	Dyad 1		Dyad 2		Dyad 3		Dyad 4	
	Parent 6	SENCo 1	Parent 5	Teacher 1	Parent 8	SENCo 2	Parent 7	Teacher 2
Participant feels similar/different to the other?	Similar	Different	Similar	Not concl.	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Similarity score* (%) – education	83	67	87	73	75	93	82	87
Similarity score* (%) – parenting	87	83	87	82	?**	80	97	94

* Similarity score – a measure of similarity between scores given to “ideal school/parent” and “ideal school/parent as viewed by the other” (see section 3.7.3)

** Parent 8 dropped out of the research, data is missing.

Another teacher thought it is due to the mother having her focus on the future transition into the more formal secondary school:

SENCo 1: I think she would be thinking about Child 6 not only now, but in the future. And I think she would be thinking about how she thinks, well she already knows what [secondary school] is like because like she’s got a child there, so I think she’s going to have a fairly realistic view of secondary school which can tend towards slightly more passive learning, I think. (Education interview, 595-599).

Interestingly, teachers’ perceptions in this area seemed to resonate with beliefs which mothers have actually expressed on the topic of good learning behaviour in class (see section 4.3.2).

Theme 3. Teachers: “having high aspirations is less important for the mothers”

The same two teachers felt that the mother would place less importance on having high aspirations for their children and supporting their academic

achievements. However, teachers seemed to find it hard to make sense of this difference:

Teacher 1: I think we work together, and I think she was good at nodding, as in “yes, I’ll do that and yes”, but I’m not sure she totally got why, and understood what I was giving her was all about. And I suppose it’s that looking ahead [planning how to help child make progress], maybe that’s where she... I wouldn’t know if she found it important or whether she just didn’t understand what I was asking, or what really was expected of her, or it was too much effort because the child didn’t want to do it so then we don’t bother... (Parenting interview, 481-487).

It felt as if teachers’ strong focus on school-based education and progress perhaps made it more difficult for them to understand the context within which mothers were making their choices.

Theme 4. Parents: “teachers place less value on meeting the child’s needs”

Finally, three parents felt that the teacher places less importance on ensuring that the child’s needs are recognised and met (see Table 4.4. Parent 6, Parent 7 and Parent 8).

Parent 7: I’ll put her that side [of the repertory grid] because I think the teachers don’t always realise how much information the children are trying to take in, and they think they’re just teaching a normal class, but it...well, particularly people like my daughter, it can be a bit too much to take in some time, and I don’t think the teacher always realizes that. (Education interview, 382-385).

Two out of three parents attributed this difference to the limitations in resources and expressed their understanding (or in some cases hopelessness) of the restraints of the school environment:

Parent 7: ...if there is a problem at school and Child 7 is upset about something, the teacher shouted at her, she's very sensitive, I will try and work out with her what was going on at the time that the teacher shouted at her... (Parenting interview, 767-769).

These parents felt that there was a tension between their personal desire to ensure that their child's needs were met and the pressure that teachers were under to educate and look after the rest of the children in class. Interestingly, data on educational beliefs suggests that teachers valued meeting individual needs as much as the mothers, however they did have a different approach to doing so (see Table 4.3., Theme 1).

4.4.3. Research question four: the role of beliefs in parent-school collaboration

In order to answer this question, the participants were invited to discuss the role that beliefs might have in the process of collaboration and describe a situation (if any) where they felt they held different views from the other. Five out of seven participants felt that their beliefs do not play any significant part in the process of collaboration (see Table 4.6). Participants were keen to talk about other factors that promote collaboration. Even though the time did not allow a full discussion, two main themes were identified and used to supplement more detailed findings on collaboration presented in section 4.2.

Theme 1. Collaboration is based on effective problem-solving

Teachers and some parents commented that collaboration is based on the process of successful problem-solving, which normally involves the teacher advising the mother on the best way of supporting the child.

Table 4.6. The role of beliefs and other factors in the process of collaboration

		Do beliefs have a role?	What helps collaboration?	What hinders collaboration?
Dyad 1	SENCo1	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and communicating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When what the parent wants for the child cannot be provided by school.
	Parent 6	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing about child's needs and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When problems cannot be solved due to constraints of the school environment
Dyad 2	Teacher 1	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving effective advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent not following through • Lacking understanding of teacher's advice
	Parent 5	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving effective advice, based on child's needs • Feeling that her views have been heard 	
Dyad 3	SENCo2	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving effective advice on what works (sometimes parents advise teachers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking understanding of teacher's advice • Parent becoming anxious and initiating conflict while trying to protect her child
	Parent 8	?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not feeling her views are respected • Agreed actions not completed
Dyad 4	Teacher 2	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to parent's perspective, problem-solving and finding a compromise • When parent comes in to talk about issues • Carries out agreed actions at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working parent that does not come into school
	Parent 7	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarity in beliefs helps parent to feel confident speaking to the teacher about any issues • Feeling listened to • Trying to understand the teacher • Encouraging the child to deal with difficult situations independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When teacher does not recognise child's needs

Teacher 1: I think they [beliefs] are quite a secondary thing. Because I think you're always gonna have differences with every parent,

because you're coming at it in a different way, but I still think whoever it is you're gonna impart your knowledge, to supposedly educate her, I think this is a good way in; having tried x, y and z, you're gonna do that whatever; whether you have differences or not. Yeah, and I'm very much of the attitude that, you know, I'm not an absolute expert, but I can give suggestions... (Education interview, 585-590).

Teachers who adopted a very strong expert position felt that it is not the difference in beliefs, but rather parents' inability to understand and implement the advice that prevented some parents from following through with what was suggested. Other teachers adopted less of an expert position and were more inclined to try and understand parents and look for compromises:

Teacher 2: ...but I think regardless of whether a parent likes to think about an ideal parent... you have to work with them even if they think differently about things. (...) And take on board what their thoughts are as well as your own opinions. (Parenting interview, 471-475).

Parents were generally happy to receive advice from the teacher provided that this advice was effective and based on good knowledge of the child:

Parent 5: ...I think we, we're reading from the same page. She will suggest something and I will, yeah, I'd happily go with it because I think it's a great idea. But she won't, she won't suggest something if she knows Child 5 won't be able to do it or if we won't agree, you know, something dramatic...(Education interview, 642-648).

However, situations in which mothers felt that the teacher did not understand the child led to a sense of injustice, a sense of not being heard, and overall difficulties in collaboration:

Parent 6: ...And there was a point where I was working well together, erm, and we were on the same wavelength, and we both wanted the same things for Child 6, but it just didn't happen. For Child 6, because Child 6 just carried on [getting angry in school]. Erm, so I think we were thinking about it, me and his teacher were working well together, I think possibly sometimes the problem may be in the head teacher

getting involved, because they don't, he doesn't get on very well with her, erm, and he's not willing to, but, yeah... (Education interview, 437-443).

In these situations mothers felt much stronger about the need to put their voice across to the teacher, as will be illustrated below.

Theme 2: listening to parents

This theme was important for all mothers, regardless of their overall experience of collaboration. Parents commented that feeling listened to makes it easy for them to work with the teacher:

Parent 5: (...) I think if I mention something, it's the same as if I mention something at home, Teacher 5 like tried it in class...

Researcher: So school, and, well, Teacher 5 and other people at school, they listen to what's important for you?

Parent 5: Yeah, definitely, and our views and things, yeah, definitely (Parenting interview, 789-794).

One parent also felt that being very similar to the teacher in her beliefs helps her to feel more confident about being heard and understood:

Parent 7: ...I've never sort of thought 'Oh, gosh, I'm gonna have to go and speak to the school, I don't want to because they go into saying this and that...', I've always found the teachers very approachable so, I think probably my opinions are similar to the teachers' opinions, we sort of, you know... (Education interview, 603-606).

Mothers who had difficult experiences of collaboration with the school not providing what the mothers believed was necessary for their child to feel good and learn well, tended to feel not respected and not listened to leading to strong feelings of frustration:

Parent 8: *And respect maybe [is important to have]. For all parties to respect. (...) other people's...and to take on board other people's opinions and, you know, don't just assume it's my way or no way, for every...yeah...cooperation, that's...* (Education interview, 653-658).

Thus, when describing factors that support collaboration, the participants alluded to issues related to their beliefs and values: e.g. wanting their opinion to be heard; trying to agree on targets and the needs of the child. At the same time, participants found it difficult to identify a direct relationship between beliefs and collaboration. Perhaps, for them it was not a familiar way of conceptualising the process of collaboration and in their mind other factors, such as effective problem-solving and communication, took priority.

4.5. Research question five

What are the differences (if any) between participants' values and beliefs in situations of high and low perceived quality of collaboration?

Out of the four parents that took part in the research, two were originally given low scores on the quality of collaboration Likert scale as rated by the school's SENCo; and two were given high scores (see Table 4.6.). Once the four invited mothers identified a teacher who worked closely with them, these teachers also scored their perception of collaboration on the Likert scale. Finally, the mothers also scored the same scale in relation to their perception of collaboration with the teacher. Table 4.6. summarises the scores produced as a result of each rating.

Originally, Dyads 1 and 3 were identified as having some difficulties in collaboration, while Dyads 2 and 4 – as collaborating better with each other. However, as the table 4.4 shows there was a large discrepancy between scores given from the three different perspectives (parent, teacher, SENCo), thus suggesting that perceptions of the quality of collaboration as identified by the Likert scale were quite individual or situational. This unfortunately meant that it could not be assumed that Dyad 1 and 3 were different enough

from Dyad 2 and 4 to allow a meaningful comparison between them. Thus, this research question remained unanswered.

Table 4.7. Ratings of the perceived quality of parent-teacher collaboration

	Collaboration score (out of 90)	Collaboration score (out of 90)	Collaboration score (out of 90)
	Original SENCo rating of collaboration with the parent	Teacher rating of collaboration with the parent	Parent rating of collaboration with the teacher
Dyad 1: SEnCo1 – Parent 6	53	As before*	73
Dyad 2: Teacher 1 – Parent 5	90	75	87
Dyad 3: SEnCo2 – Parent 8	51	As before*	---**
Dyad 4: Teacher 2 – Parent 7	85	73	77

* SENCo remained as the identified teacher working most closely with the family

** Parent 8 dropped out of the research – missing data.

The analysis of the data on dyad level: i.e. the dynamics of collaboration as it was experienced by the two parties (see Table 4.6. and Appendix 19) as well as the interplay between the beliefs expressed by them (see Table 4.5. and Appendix 21) brought up some interesting patterns. In particular, there was an interesting dynamic between mothers' willingness to accept teacher guidance and expertise in supporting their child and their trust in the teacher to actually understand and care about the child.

While not directly answering the research questions set in the present research these patterns give insights into dynamics of collaboration and suggest directions for future research, which will be further explored in the Discussion chapter.

4.6. Summary of the findings

In this chapter, the results of the research were discussed in relation to the five research questions. For the first two research questions (signs of quality collaboration; and beliefs about parenting and education) the results of the thematic analysis of the data was presented, both in the form of individual themes and as broader thematic areas. This allowed detailed exploration of the content of each theme as well as the relationships between them.

The next three research questions (perceptions of differences between mothers and teachers, the role of beliefs in collaboration, and comparison of high and low quality collaboration), were only partially answered due to the methodological limitations of the project which will be explored in the Discussion chapter. Nevertheless, due to the possibility of data triangulation in some areas it was possible to identify the main patterns, without compromising on the credibility of the findings.

The research findings contain overarching themes that will be further explored and put into the context of other research in the Discussion chapter. Firstly, the comparison of the data from mothers and teachers identified clear differences in perspective and sometimes language used by the two groups.

Secondly, the overall similarity of beliefs expressed by the participants, as well as their views that beliefs are an insignificant factor in the process of collaboration, creates a thought-provoking contrast to the opinion-based literature in the area (see section 2.3). Analysis of the dynamics of collaboration at the dyadic level produced some tentative observations as to when and why beliefs might become a more salient factor in the process of collaboration. These observations will also be outlined in the next chapter and linked with the directions for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1. Chapter overview

In this chapter the main research findings are summarised and placed in the context of the other research, as well as that of the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The first three sections discuss the research results relevant to: (1) values and beliefs, (2) collaboration, and (3) the links between beliefs and collaboration. In these sections pointers for future research are given, which are then summarised later in the chapter. The chapter also presents a discussion on reflexivity: the interplay between the researcher's position and the process of the research. Finally, the last two sections focus on limitations and practical applications of the study. To assist the reader, a quick summary of the main findings is provided at the beginning of each section before it goes on to discuss the overall patterns present within the data.

5.2. Values and beliefs about parenting and education

In this research, values and beliefs were investigated as a structured system, using Kelly's personal construct theory (Kelly, 1991; Horley, 1991) as well as Rokeach's definition of values (1973) (see section 1.5.2). For this reason the Repertory Grid Technique was used as one of the main research tools (see section 3.5.2).

The literature search did not identify any previous studies where *educational* or *parenting* beliefs were studied using personal construct methodology. Researchers did not tend to study beliefs as a structured system, and focussed on relatively narrow themes within their participants' beliefs instead (see section 2.4.1 for discussion).

The advantage of the approach adopted in the present study was that it allowed the participants to elicit a very *wide* range of beliefs on the topic, and

encouraged them to develop their thinking about it. However, due to the time constraints of the interview, there was less opportunity to discuss participants' beliefs in depth. As a result, elicited beliefs seemed to be more diverse but less detailed relative to other research in the area.

These theoretical and methodological differences make it difficult to compare the present research findings with the findings from the other research in this area; however, some parallels with other studies will be discussed in this section.

5.2.1. Similarity of beliefs and values amongst the participants

Participants' beliefs about parenting merged into four broad thematic areas: (1) setting boundaries, (2) building good relationships with the child, (3) supporting the child to achieve (relevant for teacher participants only), and (4) a number of more individual beliefs that seemed to be linked with specific parent or child characteristics and circumstances (see Fig. 4.2). In the area of education, five broad thematic areas were identified: (1) ensuring effective learning, (2) ensuring that the child's needs are understood and met, (3) parents and school working well together, (4) positive social times, and (5) encouraging the child's independence (relevant only for some participants) (see Fig. 4.3).

Participants showed many similarities in the beliefs that they chose to discuss during the interviews. Tables 4.2. and 4.3. illustrate how some of the major beliefs were mentioned by the vast majority of the participants (thus the grey bar in the tables is long for both the teachers and the parents).

There was a particularly noticeable uniformity in the core values expressed by the participants. Thus, the participants thought that the purpose of all parenting efforts was to ensure just two main outcomes: (1) that the child grows up emotionally secure, and (2) that the child becomes a good member of society (see Fig. 4.2).

At the same time, the purpose of education was described as: (1) to ensure the child's progress and good opportunities later on in the future and (2) to ensure that the child feels confident and enjoys the school experience (see Fig. 4.3).

The overarching value of educational success is well documented elsewhere in the research and is known to cross over cultural and social boundaries (Irwin & Elley, 2011; Sime & Sheridan, 2014; Gillies, 2006). The present research suggests that there might be a similarly overarching value in ensuring the happiness and emotional security of the child. However, within the small scale of the study it was not possible to achieve sufficient transferability of the data and further research is needed to explore this area.

There were also some examples of variance in beliefs between participants connected to their individual experiences. This was particularly noticeable with beliefs about parenting. For example, one participant spoke about the importance of "therapeutic parenting" specific to her experience of parenting adopted children. Another parent emphasised the importance of routine and structure for her daughter who would otherwise not follow family routines.

The relative diversity of parenting beliefs might be linked to the fact that parenting experiences tend to be more varied than educational ones, which are shaped by a common school environment. However, another possible explanation for this finding would be that the elements used to determine a participant's personal constructs about education were set by the researcher (pictures of school situations, see Appendix 11), while the elements used for parenting beliefs were selected by the participants. This could have increased, to some extent, the similarity of the resulting personal constructs, as the same pictures could have elicited similar associations.

The overall uniformity of the data suggests that there might be a strong common influence on beliefs and values, which is likely to be related to the culture shared by the participants. In fact, participants themselves often commented that they would expect every parent and teacher to share similar beliefs, showing that there is a strong presumption of uniformity in these areas. However, it has also been shown that people tend to ascribe positive

ratings to the elements on the repertory grid (Fransella et al., 2004). Thus, it is possible that, if the participants felt inclined to give positive ratings to both “ideal school/parent” and “ideal school/parent as viewed by the other”, this introduced a bias towards a sense of similarity with the other.

Previous research in the area is inconclusive as to the amount of variation that could be expected in the beliefs and values held by different people (see section 2.3. for discussion). However, researchers seem to agree that the most variation in beliefs occurs between people from different cultures (Harry, 2008; Hess et al., 2006; Muscott, 2002; Palawat & May, 2012). In this research, participants all belonged to the White British community (see Table 3.2.) which potentially reduced the diversity of views expressed. In the future it might be interesting to conduct a similar study with participants from different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.2. Mothers’ and teachers’ beliefs: differences in contexts

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show that, overall, there were more similarities than differences in beliefs between teachers and parents. Thus, out of 31 themes identified in parenting and educational beliefs, 26 were relevant for both groups of participants. Most noticeably the two groups agreed that it is important to:

In parenting

- ensure appropriate boundaries;
- take interest in the child’s life and talk to the child;
- have a good knowledge of the child;
- for mother and father to agree on the parenting approach.

In education

- meet individual need;
- ensure an engaging school environment;
- have sufficient resources to support learning;

- have enough opportunities for interactive learning;
- promote independence.

At the same time, there were consistent differences in *how* teachers and mothers described their beliefs: the language they used and the perspectives from which they spoke. Teachers' beliefs were often embedded in the context of their professional practice – their knowledge of the learning process and their ultimate goal to ensure children's good progress. In the area of education, this was evident in the more elaborate professional language that they used to describe educational practices. For example, what parents tended to describe as "sit-and-listen" learning, teachers would describe as "auditory learning"; what parents tended to describe as "mixing together in a pleasant way", teachers would name "coping well in unstructured times".

Teachers were also more aware of the physical limitations of the school environment. Their beliefs seemed to be shaped by the need to teach a prescribed curriculum to a class of children. Teachers often commented that their view of an "ideal school" would be different for different children, particularly those who are identified as having SEND. Thus, the theme of resources in school (see Table 4.3., Theme 6) was more important for the teachers. Some teachers described it as stressful to have to meet the individual needs of a wide range of pupils within the context of limited resources.

The teachers' orientation towards education also introduced differences in how they described good parenting. Most noticeably, teachers said that spending time with children should involve doing educational activities and homework in order to support the child's progress in school. Mothers, on the other hand, saw time spent with children as a good opportunity to play together or go out in order to develop a better bond with the child. Similarly, only teachers brought up the importance of holding high aspirations for children and supporting the school in their targets for the child (see Table 4.2, Themes 12 and 14).

Thus, teachers' beliefs seemed to be shaped by the context of their profession. There did not seem to be a similarly universal context that led to a common set of values amongst mothers. However, some similarities could be identified in their core beliefs. For many mothers it was very important to ensure a good bond and relationship not only with the child, but also with the whole of their family. Mothers attached high importance to this theme, while only some of the teachers mentioned it (see table 4.2., Theme 3). Another strong theme amongst mothers was the importance of ensuring that children are well-behaved: both to create a peaceful atmosphere at home, and, for some mothers, to protect their identity as parents since they felt judged by their child's behaviour. For example, mothers were more concerned than teachers with their child behaving well in class (see table 4.3, Theme 5). Finally, it was crucial for mothers to feel that teachers have a good understanding of their child's needs, adopt a caring approach towards the child, and treat the child fairly. Possibly, these themes showed a common concern experienced by the mothers as they entrusted the school to do a good job for their child, particularly when the child found some aspects of schooling difficult. This concern introduced noticeable differences with the teachers in Themes 1, 9 and 14 (Table 4.3) and resonated with the views of the mothers expressed during the pilot stage (see Table 4.1, Theme 5).

In previous research, the link between teachers' beliefs and their professional context has also been pointed out (Lasky, 2000; Todd & Higgins, 1998; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Sunley & Locke, 2012). For example, Lasky (2000), in her research into emotional aspects of parent-teacher interactions, discussed teachers' beliefs being shaped by the professional, norm-based discourses that originated within the culture of teaching. From a different perspective, Irwin and Elley (2011), in their research into beliefs about education held by parents, suggested that a "strategic" approach to education (whereby parents value supporting children with education at home) was more prevalent amongst parents whose background or circumstances meant that they could not assume their children's educational success. One could argue that teachers, who on a daily basis come across some children struggling in school, in the same way as the parents in Irwin

and Elley's research, become more aware of the need to work for good educational outcomes. Irwin and Elley argued that there was no clear social class divide in how parents perceived out of school educational activities. However, some researchers disagree with this. For example, Gillies (2006) argues that, for middle class parents, helping their child with homework is a rewarding activity, while for working class parents it is a situation of conflict and uncertainty. Only one of the mothers participating in this research held an educational qualification at A-level (see Table 3.1). If Gillies's observations are well founded, the social class differences might have contributed to the differences in perspectives on educational activities between mothers and teachers.

Due to time constraints, however, the exploration of the *core beliefs* was allocated relatively little space within the interviews. In the future, it might be interesting to make a full use of the RGT potential, and further explore personal belief systems; in particular core beliefs and the links between them and the participants' life experiences and social contexts. For example, it might be possible to further investigate whether school culture and teacher training shape teachers' belief systems. Similarly, it might be possible to look into the links between parental beliefs and key personal experiences, popular culture, or their family of origin.

5.3. Perspectives on collaboration

Collaboration between teachers and mothers was investigated in two ways. Firstly, during the pilot stage focus groups the participants discussed the signs of high and low quality collaboration. This data was then supplemented by the views expressed during the main stage interviews on the factors linked with the quality of collaboration (see Table 4.6). Secondly, a tentative analysis of the dynamics of collaboration with each mother-teacher dyad (see Appendix 19) highlighted some patterns that will be used to supplement the discussion in this section.

5.3.1. Similarities in participants' understanding of collaboration

There was general agreement between mothers and teachers on the main attributes of high quality collaboration: (1) good teacher-parent relationships (regular, open communication and teachers' personal traits and expertise); (2) agreement on the needs of the child (teachers adopting a holistic approach and listening to parental views); (3) sufficient resources for support (see section 4.2.1). These themes fit well with the other research in the area as outlined below.

Collaboration and the quality of teacher-parent relationships

The results of this research supported the strong evidence that collaboration is linked with communication (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Dobbins & Abbott, 2010). Researchers point out that it is not the *frequency* but the *quality* of communication that matters, with open and positive communication being particularly important (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Hess et al., 2006). Similarly, in this research, both teachers and mothers emphasised the importance of open communication.

The mothers also discussed some teachers' personal traits and skills that made the collaboration easier for them, such as teachers showing good understanding of their child, nurturing the child, believing in him/her, and showing professional expertise with regard to the child's needs. These points have been reflected in other research in this area. Thus, in Dobbins and Abbott's research (2010), parents of children from a special school named motivation to support the child, flexibility, collaborativeness, and accessibility as important personal traits for the teacher. Dinnebeil and colleagues (1996) asked both parents and professionals about factors that support collaboration. In their findings, good interpersonal skills (honesty, tact and positive attitude) and professional knowledge were mentioned. The importance of teachers' professional expertise was also emphasised in

O'Connor's research (2008) into parental views on partnerships between professionals and parents of children with SEND.

From a practical point of view, it would be valuable to investigate how teachers can be helped to develop the above skills. Interestingly, during the focus group, teachers briefly noted that certain personal characteristics help their colleagues to work with parents. However, they seemed unsure about what these characteristics might be, thus suggesting that they might benefit from opportunities to reflect on professional practice in this area.

Gathering teachers' views on what might support them in this endeavour would be an interesting direction for future research. Putting emphasis on the teacher's personal characteristics ignores the fact that these characteristics may be linked to the resources available to the teacher, as well as to the school's culture as a whole (e.g. opportunity for supervision, time to communicate and be flexible, inclusive and open school culture). Thus, when doing further work in this area, it is important to take these systemic factors into account.

Collaboration and agreement on the needs of the child

Disagreements on the needs or support for the child formed a central theme during both the focus group discussion and the individual interviews. In situations of disagreement, many mothers felt strongly that they needed to put their views across to the teachers, thus making the theme of parental voice central to the process of collaboration.

The theme of parental voice was strongly emphasised by other researchers, especially those who adopted an emancipatory stance in their work and analysed parent-teacher relationships within the context of distributions of power and resources (e.g. Hanafin & Lynch, 2002; Hess et al., 2006; Cole, 2007). These researchers, speaking on behalf of parents, highlighted the lack of power that parents had within the educational system and argued for the need to change this.

While both the teachers and the mothers in the present study pointed out the link between disagreements over the need of the child and difficulties in collaboration, it was perhaps unsurprising that their perspectives on the disagreements and the place of parental voice in resolving it sometimes differed dramatically. These differences will be analysed in greater detail in section 5.3.2.

Collaboration and resources

Finally, both teachers and, to a lesser extent, mothers felt that resources, the systemic constraints of the school environment, and SEND support systems had a significant impact on collaboration. Examples include: human and material resources; the number of children in class; expectations of pace and progress; high thresholds for referrals and lack of specialist support and placements.

The link between resources and collaboration was also identified in the Dinnebeill's et al. research into parents' and professionals' descriptions of good collaboration (1996). Trainor (2010), in her study of how parents use their social capital to navigate SEND support system in an American context, also suggested that the structure of SEND provision shaped the way parents and teachers worked together. Similarly, Todd and Higgins (1998), in their case study of the process of statutory assessment, described how the collaboration of all the players within this process was affected by the formal procedure of the assessment.

In this research the participants often appealed to resources as an explanation for their difficulties in collaboration. In some instances, mothers and teachers seemed to be able to empathise and understand the pressures that the other person might be under. In other situations, participants referred to limitations in resources as not being an excuse for the sort of difficulties in collaboration that they have encountered. Some teachers reflected that while limitations in resources made collaboration more difficult, it helped when the

frustrations about the resources could be openly discussed, thus linking it with the importance of open communication.

To summarise, there seems to be a general agreement between the present research findings and what other researchers have found to contribute to high quality collaboration between parents and teachers. The studies referred to above drew on opinions of participants from three different countries: the USA (Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Adams & Christenson, 2000; Trainor, 2010), Ireland (Dobbins & Abbott, 2010), and the UK (Todd & Higgins, 1998). Some of these studies involved large samples. Thus, collaboration seems to be understood similarly by a wide range of people within the context of English-speaking, European culture.

5.3.2. Differences in perspectives between teachers and mothers

Teacher as an expert

Whilst being thematically similar, the teachers' and mothers' views on collaboration differed in the perspectives they adopted in regard to the topic. In line with previous research findings (Lasky, 2000; Cole, 2007), many teachers seemed to adopt an expert position in their role in the child's education and acted from this position in their interactions with parents. Teachers tended to believe that their teaching experience, as well as their knowledge of the educational system, gave them the expertise to decide what the child's targets should be, and what sort of strategies could help achieve them.

Teachers were open to dialogue with the parents, valued involving them in education, and believed that this would benefit the child. At the same time, they seemed to feel that it was their professional responsibility to remain in charge. As in Lasky's (2000) research, some teachers also suggested that their expert position was predetermined by the monitoring role they were

allocated within the safeguarding system, whereby they were expected to direct and monitor parents whose child was subject to the safeguarding procedures.

From their expert position, teachers appreciated when parents supported them in their goals; and felt frustrated with parents who did not follow through with the agreed actions. In line with observations made by Lalvani (2014), in these situations, teachers described parents in deficit-based terms such as “lacking understanding” or “not having the capacity” to complete certain tasks. Some authors argue (Lalvani, 2014; Cole, 2007) that deficit-based labels allow teachers to preserve their position of power by locating the “problem” within the parent and protecting their professional status.

These research findings highlighted that while the teachers used these labels, they also strived to ensure that collaboration with the parents was smooth, and wanted to find a way forward in difficult situations. Some teachers expressed a real sense of care towards children and parents, and felt stuck as their continued attempts to help did not come to fruition. This finding corroborates Lasky’s (2000) observations that the caring values drive teachers’ actions.

Teachers felt threatened when parents had enough power to officially challenge their expert position through formal complaints or appeals to the SEND tribunal. In these situations, teachers described feeling pushed to become defensive, vulnerable, and hurt. The latter emotion also indicated the well-intended and caring position from which the teacher had originally acted.

While teachers felt like experts in education, they also felt constrained by the limitations of the educational system, which they did not feel they were able to change. For example, some teachers referred to the pressure from the Ofsted to ensure a pre-determined level of progress for all children, regardless of what the teacher believed was appropriate for the child. Some teachers also felt that the mainstream school system, including the class sizes and the pace of learning, was not suitable for all children. They felt

under pressure or frustrated by the need to include every child into this environment.

These findings echo the observations made by Rothe et al. (2014) and Todd and Higgins (1998), who suggested that teachers are bound by their obligation to follow set procedures, as prescribed by the educational system, which do not allow them to freely choose how to support the child, or fully follow parental voices in this process.

Considering how the teachers' professional context seemed to impact on their educational and parenting beliefs (see section 5.2.2), it could be argued that some teachers were not only *bound* by their context, but also *shaped* by this context in regard to their views. Thus, some teachers seemed to believe that the right way of supporting a child was the way prescribed by the constraints and structures of the system. For example, that a child with difficult behaviours needed to be educated in a specialist setting.

Parental voice

Many mothers seemed to expect the teacher to adopt an expert role in their child's education and were accepting or even grateful for the helpful advice and guidance on the issues related to their child's learning and behaviour (for example, see Appendix 19, Parent 5). These mothers tended to feel that their views were sufficiently heard by the teacher, trusted them to be in charge, and were happy, to some extent, to follow teacher recommendations at home, thus not seeking more power in their relationship with the teacher. Even when there were differences in the perspectives between the mother and the teacher, these mothers were happy to follow the teacher's guidance and shift their opinions, providing that this benefited the child.

At the same time, there were a number of mothers who felt strongly that their views had not been heard by the school as much as they would have liked. This feeling often occurred in situations of disagreement over the child's needs, or the provision required (for example, see Appendix 19, Parents 8

and 6). In these cases, the respect towards the teacher's expertise seemed to suffer, as mothers felt that the teacher did not seem to "get" the child or the strategies suggested by the teacher did not prove to be effective. Mothers did not want to keep following the teacher's lead and wanted to take more charge of the process to ensure that the school carried out the actions that they believed would help their child.

In these situations, mothers often expressed strong feelings of frustration, anger and injustice (thus wishing to have more power) or giving up and hopelessness (thus allowing for the unsatisfactory status quo to continue). Mothers also used deficit-based descriptions for teachers, thus preserving their own sense of rightness, such as "defensive" and "closed teachers", "teachers who don't have a clue about SEND", "not good communicators", and "not following through with promises".

In the opinion articles which adopt the emancipatory perspective, the theme of parental voice is often given a high priority. Thus, Cole (2007) argues that giving mothers a stronger voice in their children's education is the only way forward if we want to develop the SEN system. Lalvani (2014), in her article on the deficit-based labels used by the teachers, questions why parents are expected to simply accept professional opinion and judgement. As was shown above, these points were echoed by the mothers in this research who found themselves in situations of open disagreement.

At the same time, empirical studies suggest that many parents are happy to follow the teacher's guidance and accept their expertise in the SEND provision for their children, and do not necessarily strive to be given more voice in this process. Thus, in the research by Rothe et al. (2014) many parents showed a high recognition of teachers' expertise in the education of their pre-school-aged children, identified as having SEND. Similar findings were reported in Hess et al.'s (2006) study into parental voice in decision making with regards to their children with SEND. Giving parents a voice was only briefly mentioned amongst the factors that supported collaboration, both in Dinnebeil et al.'s (1996) large-scale research into parental and professionals' views on collaboration, and in Dobbins and Abbott's research

(2010) into what parents of children in a special school thought would improve their partnership with the school. Findings obtained in the present research supported the above points and suggested that many mothers are comfortable following teachers' guidance.

Summary: power and trust

In this research, mothers varied in how they responded to the issues of power within their interactions with the teachers. In line with observations made by Todd and Higging's (1998), this research suggests that power differentials are inherent in parent-teacher relationships and are more complex than a simple dichotomy of a "powerful teacher" and a "powerless parent" sometimes presented in studies of parent-school collaboration (e.g. Cole, 2007).

Thus, teachers took on an expert role following their professional positioning, knowledge, and expertise. Mothers did not necessarily experience their less-powerful position as negative. They were often comfortable with the teacher being in charge of their child's education and SEND support, providing that they trusted the teacher to keep the child's best interests at heart, and to have a good understanding of the child's needs. There were occasions when this trust helped to some extent to preserve collaboration, even when the teacher struggled to actually meet the needs of the child (for example, see Appendix 19, Parent 6).

The feeling of being disempowered seemed to become more acute and negative for mothers in situations in which this trust towards the teacher had broken down. The breakdown of trust seemed to be linked to occasions where the mother felt that the teacher did not "get" the child, thus not giving the child the right support for his or her needs, or treated the child unfairly, not seeing the positives and the potential. In these situations, it was also more apparent that the teacher's perspective was embedded or shaped by the context of the school system, whereby pressures other than the needs of that particular child started to take the priority.

In situations of breakdown in trust teachers seemed to remain in charge of the process, and both the mother and the teacher, tended to enter a pattern of mutual blame, wherein they attributed each other with deficit-based labels that led to defensiveness and difficulties with communication. Conflict and disagreement tended to leave both parties feeling frustrated, hurt, stuck and, in different ways, disempowered by not being able to achieve what they thought would benefit the child.

Trust has been previously emphasised as an important factor in collaboration and shown to develop on the basis of regular, open, and positive communication (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Lasky 2000). The central role that trust seems to play in this process suggests that in situations of emerging disagreements, it is important to help teachers and parents move away from mutual blame and towards open communication and mutual understanding. The next section discusses research findings regarding the links between beliefs and collaboration, and suggests how the future research could investigate the ways in which working with beliefs can be used to promote positive parent-school relationships.

5.4. Links between collaboration and beliefs

Overall, the participants seemed to find the process of reflection on the link between the beliefs and relationships quite difficult and felt that there was not a strong link between these two phenomena. This is an interesting finding, given the strong theoretical and empirical evidence supporting the existence of a link between belief systems and interpersonal behaviour (see sections 1.5.2. and 2.3. for discussion).

One possible explanation is that in everyday life people do not normally engage in this type of thinking, but need a special environment (e.g. clinical supervision) to develop the skills for reflection. It is possible that the format of the present research did not provide sufficient support for the participants in

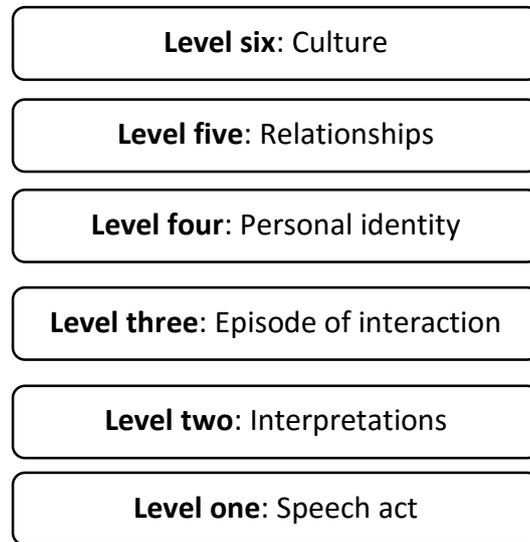
this reflective process, thus being unable to bring out their views on the links between their beliefs and interactions with the other.

Descriptions of beliefs and the collaboration within each parent-teacher dyad (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5; Appendix 19) provide examples of situations in which beliefs had a clear role in the process. For example, Parent 5 and Teacher 1 expressed opposite beliefs about the amount of work that should be done at home, which led to on-going issues in their communication and collaboration about the homework, in spite of an overall positive experience of working together. Similarly, SENCo 2 reflected that, perhaps, for Parent 8 it was more important to protect her child, while for SENCo 2, it was more important to develop his ability to cope independently, which might have contributed to the misunderstandings between them.

Exploring in a greater depth the beliefs held by a teacher and a parent in the process of collaboration and using this information to improve their relationships (e.g. by promoting reflection and developing a better understanding of each other's important beliefs) would constitute a compelling area for future research. The Coordinated Management of Meanings' (CMM, Pearce, 2004) systemic practice model could be used as a conceptual framework to structure investigation in this direction. According to this model, social interactions could be seen as influenced by the beliefs people hold on multiple levels. These levels are commonly chosen as shown on picture 5.1, however, other levels can be added as required. All of the levels are interlinked and guide interpersonal relationships.

This research accessed participants' beliefs held at the level of a culture – a set of beliefs that was similar for many participants. Participants commented that in spite of these similarities, they differed in how they *acted*. For example, teachers felt that most parents would agree with them on the importance of setting consistent boundaries for their child, however, not all parents would actually act on this belief. Thus, the participants pointed out the differences in beliefs at the lower levels of the CMM (e.g. "speech act" and "episode").

Picture 5.1. Coordinated Management of Meaning model (adapted from Oliver, 2005)



Further research into beliefs and collaboration could focus on the middle levels of the model, such as “family/school culture” and “relationship”. This might provide new information on the links between beliefs and collaboration, as well as helping to explore ways of improving parent-teacher interactions, thus creating what Pearce referred to as “better social worlds” (2004).

5.5. Reflexivity

My initial interest in the area of beliefs and collaboration was originally guided by my personal and professional experiences: parenting in two different cultures and supporting “vulnerable” families (see Section 1.4 for discussion). These experiences suggested to me that people can differ significantly in their beliefs and that sometimes this might make collaboration more difficult.

Thus, the three underlying assumptions that guided this research could be identified as:

1. Parents and teachers want to collaborate with each other in order to support the child;
2. There are occasions when they feel that their beliefs on parenting or education differ;
3. Differences in beliefs make collaboration more difficult.

Additionally, when choosing the RGT-based data gathering procedure, I also presumed that: (4) the participants would be interested in talking about their beliefs and perceived differences with each other.

In the process of the research, my thinking about beliefs and their links with collaboration was challenged, as well as supported and developed. This section describes the impact of the research on the above assumptions.

5.5.1. The value of collaboration

The assumption that teachers and parents want to collaborate with each other was unequivocally supported by the participants. Throughout the research, it was evident that collaboration was an interesting and personal topic for a wide range of teachers and parents. Participants expressed strong feelings in response to situations wherein collaboration was particularly good or difficult. It was rewarding to feel that the participants wanted to talk about collaboration and it helped me to keep going with the research.

5.5.2. How much do beliefs differ?

Having come from a different culture, I have been exposed to a wide range of beliefs, and thus tend to question the assumption that there is only one “right way”. At the same time, the sample for this research came from a relatively homogeneous, rural, White British community, which meant that the participants were likely to have had similar educational and, to a lesser extent, parenting experiences, and tended to feel similar to each other. I had

to be careful not to impose my search for differences onto the participants and to allow for my thinking to be adjusted by their different world view.

Additionally, I felt that my own parenting and educational beliefs were different from many of those expressed by the participants. It was important for me to reflect in the moment on my reactions and preserve the position of neutrality, even when the participants' views provoked strong reactions of surprise or judgment in me. Having heard how people described and justified their beliefs also somewhat shifted my beliefs as a parent and as a Trainee Educational Psychologist.

5.5.3. Differences in beliefs: do they matter?

My initial informal hypothesis suggested that differences in beliefs might contribute to difficulties in collaboration. This research made me aware that the participants tend to hold different theories on what makes collaboration effective, whereby issues more practical than beliefs come to the forefront of their thinking. It was interesting for me to consider how the differences in our perspectives might have affected their experience of participation in my research, e.g. how well the participants understood my questions and whether they felt sufficiently in charge and fully engaged with the process of the research.

As was shown in Chapter 2, there are a number of theoretical approaches to studying parent-school collaboration. The Cultural Capital Theory (Lareau, 2015), together with comments made by Todd and Higgins (1998), provided the theoretical framework for this research. It guided my interest and drew my attention to the data that either supported or contradicted the theory. Mostly, the research findings supported Todd and Higgins's view on how the issues of power play out in parent-school interactions (see section 5.3.2). My original theoretical position was perhaps most challenged, when participants' descriptions of collaboration suggested that they do not necessarily want more power in their relationships with the teacher, and are often appreciative

of the teacher's expertise and happy for them to take the lead in the child's education.

5.5.3 Do participants find it interesting to talk about beliefs?

Having spent the last 15 years in a profession that encourages reflection, I became more aware of my own beliefs and interested in the beliefs of others. The process of this research reminded me once more that people do not necessarily find it interesting or easy to reflect on these topics. I was surprised to discover that the participants found some aspects of the RGT and reflection on the beliefs held by others to be difficult and not necessarily relevant to their everyday lives. This experience reminded me how much my professional development affected my way of thinking about human interactions, and that I need to be more careful in my choice of concepts and approaches when communicating with people outside of the profession.

5.6. Research limitations

5.6.1. Limitations of the sample

The sample used in this research was purposefully recruited to represent parents and teachers who might find it more difficult to collaborate with each other. This approach was effective enough in involving parents and teachers who had had some difficult episodes in their relationships. It was a shame that one of the parents with particularly difficult experiences chose not to attend the second interview.

It became apparent that collaboration was perceived differently from different perspectives, and at different points in time (see section 4.5 for discussion). Unfortunately this made the recruitment of contrasting cases difficult from a logistical as well as an ethical point of view, and did not allow for recruitment of extreme cases.

The research sample unfortunately did not include any fathers. The researcher's attempts to involve fathers led to significant logistical difficulties as two of the mothers were separated and the other two had partners who worked full time, thus not being available for a day-time interview.

As was shown in section 2.4.2., this is a common methodological problem for research in this area, and overcoming it would require additional resources and flexibility from the researcher. This would be an important issue to consider in further research in this area.

5.6.2. Limitations of data gathering technique

RGT has proved to be an effective tool for eliciting beliefs on a particular topic. It encouraged the participants to develop their thinking about the topic and they commented on RGT as being both intellectually challenging and interesting exercise. Using RGT suited well the explorative purpose of the research: it allowed eliciting a *diverse* range of the participants' beliefs in an under-researched areas of parenting and education without investigating these beliefs in any significant depth.

However, RGT is a relatively complex tool that requires the researcher to be well-skilled in order to avoid falling into traps that only become apparent once the researcher is more familiar with the technique. In particular, it can be difficult to avoid "bent constructs" that don't contain a clear polarity but rather represent a blend of two separate constructs (Fransella et al., 2004), as well as propositional constructs that do not represent a personally meaningful category for the participant (Jankowicz, 2004).

Despite a number of trials of RGT conducted during the pilot stage of the research, there was the potential issue that the researcher became more skilled at using this technique later on in the study, and thus missed out on valuable data at the earlier stages of the data gathering process.

Additionally, as was mentioned above, the format of the study did not allow enough time for a more in-depth investigation of personal constructs,

whereby the researcher, together with the participant, could have explored in detail the dynamic nature of the participant's beliefs as well as the links between them. As Yorke (1978) warns, in this basic form, the RGT can contribute to our observations of the participant's beliefs system, but it is unlikely to produce a full understanding of the way in which a person views the world. He argues that when used in this way, the RGT provides just a "single snapshot" rather than a film of a person's world view in its fluid and dynamic form.

5.6.3. Overall limitation of the research design

This attempted to investigate two complex phenomena: (1) participants' belief systems held in the areas of parenting and education, and (2) the links between those and the process of collaboration within each parent-teacher dyad. For a small-scale research, this was a very ambitious goal and despite the large amount of relevant data gathered in the process, it was not possible to fully reach it.

This issue had a particularly significant impact on the data gathered for research questions 3 and 4, which focussed on the links between beliefs and collaboration. The data for these questions was gathered at the end of each interview when not enough time was left to actually explore the participants' views and experiences in this area. As a result, the data lacked in richness and credibility and the questions remained only partially answered (see sections 4.4. and 4.5.).

Overall, the research has produced some interesting results. However, they need to be treated as first steps that could signpost further investigations in these areas, rather than as an in-depth investigation of the topic. The next section summarises the main directions for future research.

5.7. Directions for future research

A number of directions for future research were mentioned throughout this chapter and are summarised in this section.

1. To keep developing sample recruitment models that would involve more participants from more diverse backgrounds, including parents who find it particularly difficult to work with professionals as well as fathers and other significant family members. Research with parents from different cultures might produce interesting data about cultural differences in beliefs and approaches to collaboration.
2. The RGT has good potential as a tool for developing a much more detailed understanding of participants' belief systems than was attempted in the present research. It might be helpful to narrow down any future research to just one area of beliefs (e.g. either parenting or education) and to explore in greater detail the participants' beliefs and the links with their experiences and the context and life circumstances. For this it might be useful to follow data analysis approaches that allow a greater exploration of individual experiences (e.g. interpretive phenomenological analysis or discourse analysis). By doing so, we can build up a rather limited body of knowledge on beliefs held by teachers and parents, as well as investigate the links between local cultures (e.g. school culture) and the beliefs held by its members.
3. It might be useful to use the CMM as a research framework for investigating how beliefs held at the different levels of the model come into play in the process in parent-teacher interactions (see section 5.4). The application of this model to the area of parent-school interactions could be particularly valuable as an approach for improving interpersonal relationships through reflection and increased understanding of other people's perspectives. Thus, applying the CMM approach could potentially lead to the

development of a method that could be used by educational psychologists and other professionals, either in situations of parent-school conflict or as part of teacher-training.

4. The present research points out a number of teacher skills and characteristics that mothers believed made it easier for them to collaborate with the teachers. Further investigation of teachers' views on what might help them to develop these skills and characteristics, as well as research into school culture and resources that could support teachers in this process, would constitute a useful direction for future research.

5.8. Implications for practice

The research findings highlighted three points that are important for educational psychologists to consider when supporting collaboration between parents and school staff.

Firstly, within the culturally homogeneous research sample, there were significant similarities between teachers and mothers in the important beliefs that they hold about parenting and education. These widely accepted higher-order beliefs and values could provide reference points for setting mutually-relevant targets, even in situations where there are significant disagreements between parents and teachers on other levels. At the same time previous research suggests that some important parenting and educational beliefs tend to vary between different cultures (Harry, 2008). This has to be taken into account when working in more culturally diverse areas of the country where one cannot presume that the abovementioned similarities in beliefs would apply.

Secondly, differences in perspectives between mothers and teachers were clearly evident throughout the data. These differences seemed to be linked with the resources and priorities existing within the social context of the two groups. Most noticeably teachers' perspectives were embedded within the

social context of the school system (see section 5.2.2.). Such differences in perspectives are likely to have an impact on how teachers and mothers set goals for the child and go about reaching them. Professionals supporting teachers and parents in this process need to be aware of these differences and not presume that any action plan would be contextually relevant and realistic for both mothers and parents.

Helping people to reflect on the way context affects the perspectives and actions of everyone involved can be helpful in the promotion of collaboration, as has been pointed out in the previous research (Jordan et al., 1998). This could be an important step away from the mutual blame and deficit-based narratives towards more mutual understanding and effective joint problem-solving.

Finally, the participants' views on factors that support collaboration, as well as their collaborative experiences suggest that nurturing parental trust in the school is one of the key elements in experiences of positive collaboration.

Research findings suggest that trust develops on the basis of:

- Regular, open, and positive communication, including discussions about limitations of the school environment and SEND provision;
- Teachers displaying certain interpersonal skills and characteristics, such as demonstrating their holistic understanding of the child and the child's strengths and needs, showing a positive and caring attitude towards the child and the family.

These points can be used to help schools improve on their practice of working with parents. They can also be used as a guide when analysing situations in which there is an emerging breakdown in collaboration and trust between the school and the family.

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APPENDICES

Literature Review

Appendix 1: Overview of the articles selected for critical review

Title	Hard to reach parents or hard to reach schools? A discussion of home–school relations, with particular reference to Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents		Authors, year, country	Crozier & Davies, 2007, UK
Methodology	Individual/group interviews with parents, children, teachers and professionals. Case studies and grounded theory approach.			
Theoretical framework	Dale's topology of parental involvement			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	interviews in native language.	detailed description of the context of the community and of the schools	process of interviews / group interviews not explained clearly	reference to the process of coding made, but not expanded on. no extracts of interviews in text and no reference to the themes emerged in grounded theory. Analytic narrative feels structured to suit the argument.
Title	Working class mothers and school life: exploring the role of emotional capital		Authors, year, country	Gillies, 2006, UK
Methodology	Purposeful recruitment of low-income families, interviews.			
Theoretical framework	Cultural and emotional capital			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	authors are aware of middle-class / low class divisions; no details about the rapport / length of interviews.	Brief description of the context of the families	research seems well designed although not much detail given	researcher's position not clarified,.
Title	“You want the best for your kids”: improving educational outcomes for pupils living in poverty through parental engagement		Authors, year, country	Sime & Sheridan, 2014, UK

Methodology	Parents, children, school staff and professionals. Observations, interviews and focus groups.			
Theoretical framework	Cultural capital			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	Not very clear how rapport was established;	population is well described	process clearly and logically explained	computer analysis, interviews - two researchers; coding clearly described.
Title	When teachers' and parents' values differ: Teachers' ratings of academic competence in children from low-income families.		Authors, year, country	Hauser-Cram, Sirin & Stipek, 2003, USA
Methodology	Questionnaires for teachers; observations of their teaching style; assessment of students' abilities. Correlational design.			
Theoretical framework	Not specified			
Quality indicators	Internal validity	Generalisability	Reliability	Objectivity
	not clear whether the values questionnaire measures what authors hoped it would - simplistic view? Other measures - good validity	sample - described, but no sample selection bias explained	interrater reliability for observations was good	triangulating observer ratings and teacher self-report – good approach
Title	Parent beliefs and children's social-behavioral functioning: The mediating role of parent–teacher relationships		Authors, year, country	Kim, Sheridan, Kwon, Koziol, 2003, USA
Methodology	Questionnaires and rating scales for parents and teachers			
Theoretical framework	Motivational beliefs model of parental involvement			
Quality indicators	Internal validity	Generalisability	Reliability	Objectivity
	scales used - no reported construct validity, developed by the same team earlier.	sample diverse and well described	measures clearly described however not much is said about their quality	research all done through survey's - probably low risk of bias

	Cronbach Alpha reported.			
Title	Parent Empowerment: Connecting With Preservice Special Education Teachers,		Authors, year, country	Murray, Handyside, Straka, & Arton-Titus, 2013, USA
Methodology	Parents, focus groups, IPA			
Theoretical framework	Not specified			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	Prolonged, intensive involvement. good grouping with examples	detailed description of context, however, need to be more careful with claims about using their findings to build trust outside of a course environment	Clear outline of focus groups	Two independent from the research coders of the transcriptions. however no overview of thematic analysis processes - unclear how well themes are composed
Title	Inclusive transition processes – considering socio-economically disadvantaged parents’ views and actions for their child’s successful school start.		Authors, year, country	Rothe, Urban & Werning, 2014, Germany
Methodology	Parents, teachers and children. Longitudinal design (3 years), interviews.			
Theoretical framework	ecological and dynamic model of transition			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	very prolonged engagement	good description of the context	Very limited of the process of interviews	No description of researcher's position or of data analysis.
Title	Powerlessness in professional and parent partnerships.		Authors, year, country	Todd & Higgins, 1998, UK
Methodology	Parents and professionals, interviews.			
Theoretical framework	Cultural capital theory			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability

	not described	context of deprived area given	not described	not described
Title	Reexamining the promise of parent participation in special education: An analysis of cultural and social capital.		Authors, year, country	Trainor, 2010, USA
Methodology	Focus groups and individual interviews with families. Grounded theory analysis guided by social capital theory			
Theoretical framework	Cultural capital theory			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	FG + interview - a strong combination for checking back and prolonged engagement ; use of translator for Spanish speaking families;	description of the sample – given; attempts to have diverse sample - made	Consistently followed research procedure	researcher's position – reflected on; repeating cycle of interpretation; use of Nvivo programme
Title	A qualitative analysis of parents' and service coordinators' descriptions of variables that influence collaborative relationships.		Authors, year, country	Dinnebeil, Hale & Rule, 1996, USA
Methodology	Large scale qualitative survey for parents and key workers; thematic analysis			
Theoretical framework	Classifications of factors affecting parental collaboration			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
	Member check on 15% of the data and re-development of codes.	Context (demographics) given. Very large sample.	process clearly outlined	clearly explained, inter-rater reliability calculated
Title	The cultural and emotional politics of teacher–parent interactions.		Authors, year, country	Lasky, 2000, USA/Canada
Methodology	Individual interviews with teachers			
Theoretical framework	Emotional politics of teaching framework			
Quality indicators	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability

	<p>Author says it was on a low side due to one-off interview and sensitive topic. The analytic narrative is structured to confirm authors' argument rather than being data-driven.</p>	<p>Sample clearly described and attempts made to make it diverse</p>	<p>Procedure seems consistent</p>	<p>Procedure clearly explained, two independent coders used.</p>
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Research procedure

Appendix 2: Research project plan

	Jan' 15	Feb' 15	Mar '15	Apr' 15	May' 15	Jun' 15	Jul' 15	Aug '15	Sep' 15	Oct' 15	Nov '15	Dec '15	Jan' 16	Feb' 16	Mar '16	Apr' 16	May' 16
Ethical permission																	
Phase 1: Pilot																	
Discussion with schools																	
Recruitment, consent																	
F- groups/int. with school staff																	
Trail of repertory grids with parents																	
Them.anal. & design of collaboration Likert scale																	
Adjusting res. techn. on feedback from parents																	
Phase 2: main data collection																	
Recruiting parent and staff samples																	
Semi-structured interviews with parents and staff																	
Phase 3: data analysis																	
Thematic data analysis from repertory grids and interviews																	
Data interpretation																	
Feedback for participants																	
Write up								Lit. Review	Methodol.	Results					Disc		

Appendix 3.1: Invitation letter for parents joining the pilot stage

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London E15 4LZ

Researcher: Maria Ionides

Contact Details: maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear parent

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist on placement in the Community Educational Psychology Service. As part of my Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology training at the University of East London I am carrying out a research project into *collaboration between school staff and parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)*. This letter tells you about this project and invites you to take part if you are interested.

What is it about?

My research is called: Personal constructs held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of pupils with SEND in the context of parent-school collaboration.

This means that I am interested to find out:

- What do school staff and parents think is important in children's education and upbringing (what are their "personal constructs")?
- What are the differences and similarities in their views?

- Are these views held by the parents and school staff important for the quality of their collaboration?

What does it involve?

My research has two parts: the trial part (or pilot study) and the main part. I would like to invite you to participate in *the trial* and become a part of an expert group for this project.

This means that I would like to ask for your opinion on:

- What does "good" or "poor" collaboration with your child's school mean for you? Your views will be turned into a "Quality of Collaboration" questionnaire used in the main part of this study
- Whether you think the technique I am planning to use during the main part of my study is a good way of asking parents about their values. Your feedback will inform the way I use this technique in the main part of the study.
- When my research is completed (approximately November 2015) I will invite you to participate in a workshop where I will present the research findings and facilitate discussion on how we can promote mutual understanding, open dialogue and better collaboration between schools and parents.

What, when and where?

What	How long?	When?
1. Focus group for 3 parents (what is good collaboration?)	1h	March / April 2015
2. Individual interviews (feedback on the research technique)	1h	March / April 2015
3. Workshop for all participating parents (feedback and ways forward)	1.5h	Autumn 2015

Altogether I will ask for 2 hours of your time in March or April 2015 and 1.5h of your time in the Autumn 2015. If you agree to take part I will contact you by phone or email and arrange a convenient time and place. The focus group is likely to happen in an office located locally and the interview can happen in your home or in an office - whichever is more convenient.

What will happen with the information you give?

1. Focus group on what is "good collaboration" between schools and parents

The aim of the focus group is to gather opinions on what is “good collaboration”. Our discussion will be audio-recorded and then processed to compose a “quality of collaboration rating scale” used in the next step of the project.

2. Individual interviews

During the individual interview I will ask you questions about what is important for you in parenting and education using technique called Repertory Grid.

Our conversation will be audio recorded and informal feedback on this technique will allow me to improve it if necessary before the main part of the study.

Anonymity

All the information you give me will be used anonymously (so that you cannot be identified); To ensure you anonymity I will do the following:

- When audio records are typed up and all the names will be replaced with pseudonyms.
- Audio records will be destroyed at the end of the project (August 2016). Typed up data will be destroyed three years after the project is completed (August 2019).
- All data will be stored on a password-protected computer. My research supervisors might have access to the typed up data to help me with data analysis. No one else will have access to these data.
- Reports and feedback that are produced as a result of this study will not include any information that can identify you (such as names, school and life circumstances).

Confidentiality

All data gathered will be strictly confidential: it will not be shared with any other participants or outside agencies unless obtained information suggests that someone might be at risk of a significant harm. I will not discuss anything you told me with people other than my supervisors for the purposes other than data analysis.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to change your mind and quit the study (withdraw) at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without giving any reason. Should you withdraw after 1st April 2015, the researcher reserves the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor:

Dr Miles Thomas

School of Psychology

University of East London

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ.

Tel: 020 8223 6396

Email address: m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:

Dr. Mark Finn

School of Psychology

University of East London

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ.

Tel: 020 8223 4493

Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ionides

06/02/2015

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

**School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London E15 4LZ**

Researcher: Maria Ionides

Contact Details: maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Phone number: 01480 373267

Appendix 3.2: Invitation letter for parents joining the main stage

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear parent

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist on placement in the Community Educational Psychology Service. As part of my Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology training at the University of East London I am carrying out a research project into collaboration between school staff and parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This letter tells you about this project and invites you to take part if you are interested.

What is it about?

My research is called: "Values held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of pupils with SEND in the context of parent-school collaboration".

This means that I am interested to find out:

What do school staff and parents think is important in children's education and upbringing?

What are the differences and similarities in their views?

Are these views held by the parents and school staff important for the quality of their collaboration?

What does it involve?

What: I would like to carry out two interviews with you (and your partner or other members of your family if they want to take part). Each interview will last for 40-60 minutes. During this time we will talk about what you find important in education and parenting.

Where: We will agree on a place convenient for you such as your home or a local office.

When: We will agree on a date and time convenient for you (during work days only) during September-October 2015.

If you have any further questions about this research I am happy to meet with you in person or you can call or email me (please see my contact details above). If you would like to participate your SENCo will share with me your contact details and I will get in touch to arrange the times for the interviews.

When my research is completed (approximately November-December 2015) I will hold a workshop for parents where I will present the research findings and discuss with parents how we can promote mutual understanding, open dialogue and better collaboration between schools and parents. You will be very welcomed to join this workshop.

What will happen with the information you give?

Both interviews will be audio recorded so that I can include all the details of our conversation in my data analysis. Then the audio recordings will be typed up and analysed to identify the main themes that came up in our conversation.

Anonymity

All the information you give me will be used anonymously (so that you cannot be identified). To ensure you anonymity I will do the following:

When audio records are typed up and all the names will be replaced with pseudonyms.

Audio records will be destroyed at the end of the project (August 2016). Typed up data will be destroyed three years after the project is completed (August 2019).

All data will be stored on a password-protected computer. My research supervisors might have access to the typed up data to help me with data analysis. No one else will have access to these data.

Reports and feedback that are produced as a result of this study will not include any information that can identify you (such as names, school and life circumstances).

Confidentiality

All data gathered will be strictly confidential: it will not be shared with any other participants or outside agencies unless obtained information suggests that someone might

be at risk of a significant harm. I will not discuss anything you told me with people other than my supervisors for the purposes other than data analysis.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to change your mind and quit the study (withdraw) at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without giving any reason. Should you withdraw after August 1st 2015, the researcher reserves the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor:

Dr Miles Thomas

School of Psychology

University of East London

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ.

Tel: 020 8223 6396

Email address: m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:

Dr. Mark Finn

School of Psychology

University of East London

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ.

Tel: 020 8223 4493

Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ionides

22/06/2015

Appendix 3.3: Invitation letter for SENCOs

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

**School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London E15 4LZ**

Researcher: Maria Ionides
Contact Details: maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear SENCO

As I have mentioned to you recently I am carrying out a research project as part of my Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology training at the University of East London. Please see below a summary of the project that will help you to decide whether your school wants participate in it.

The area and purpose of the research

The title of my research is: Personal constructs held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of pupils with SEND in the context of parent-school collaboration.

This means that I am interested to find out:

- What do school staff and parents think is important in children's education and upbringing (what are their "personal constructs")?
- What are the differences and similarities in their views?
- Are these views held by the parents and school staff important for the quality of their collaboration?

Three schools will take part in the study – two primary and one secondary mainstream provision.

Relevance to your school

The results of this project might give an insight into what do school staff and parents value in the parenting and education and whether these values are linked to the quality of parent-school collaboration. The results will be anonymously fed back to the school and to the parents which I hope will encourage more mutual understanding and dialogue in situations when collaboration is considered to be difficult.

The quality of collaboration with parents of children with SEND was shown to be important for improving outcomes for the children. This has been highlighted in the recent SEND Code of Practice. Participation in this project will provide you with additional opportunity to reflect on your own approach to collaboration with parents and to think about how to take this collaboration a step further.

What it will involve:

What	Who	How long?	When?
1. You will be invited to take part in a <i>focus group</i> about what you consider to be a “good collaboration” between school and parents. Two other SENCOs will be invited.	School’s SENCO	1h	April 2015
2. You will be asked to <i>rate</i> all the parents of children on your SEND register on a <i>Quality of Collaboration</i> scale. I will also ask you to anonymously rate these parents against a number of social deprivation criteria.	School’s SENCO	15-30 mins	April 2015
3. I will then need you help in getting in touch with two parents of children on your SEND register. I will also ask you to identify members of staff that work most closely with these parents around provision for their children (this might be yourself, pupil’s Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant or another member of staff). I will obtain parents’ and staffs’ informed consent to take part in the study	School’s SENCO	Via e-mail or phone	April-May 2015
4. Each identified member of staff will be invited to take part in two <i>individual interviews</i> .	Identified member of staff	2 hours	May – July 2015
5. The results of the study will be fed back in form of a workshop for participating school SENCOs. This workshop will be treated as an opportunity to think on how to promote mutual understanding, dialogue and collaboration with parents.	School’s SENCO and/or identified members of staff	Workshop – 1.5h	Autumn term 2015

Thus altogether I will need about 3h of your time and about 2h of time from a member of staff who works closely with selected families (which might also be you).

What data will be gathered and how it will be processed:

1. Focus groups on what is “good collaboration” between schools and parents
The aim of initial focus groups is to gather participants’ opinions on what is “good collaboration”. The discussion will be audio-recorded and then processed to compose a “Quality of Collaboration” rating scale used in the next step of the project.
2. Individual interviews
During individual interviews I will ask questions about participants’ values in parenting and education using technique called Repertory Grid.
Individual interviews will be audio-recorded for data analysis.

Anonymity

All the information you give me will be used anonymously (so that you cannot be identified); To ensure you anonymity I will do the following:

- When audio records are typed up and all the names will be replaced with pseudonyms.
- Audio records will be destroyed at the end of the project (August 2016). Typed up data will be destroyed three years after the project is completed (August 2019).
- All data will be stored on a password-protected computer. My research supervisors might have access to the typed up data to help me with data analysis. No one else will have access to these data.
- Reports and feedback that are produced as a result of this study will not include any information that can identify you (such as names, school and life circumstances).

Confidentiality

All data gathered will be strictly confidential: it will not be shared with any other participants or outside agencies unless obtained information suggests that someone might be at risk of a significant harm. I will not discuss anything you told me with people other than my supervisors for the purposes other than data analysis.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to change your mind and quit the study (withdraw) at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without giving any reason. Should you withdraw after 1st August 2015, the researcher reserves the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor:

Dr Miles Thomas
School of Psychology
University of East London
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ.
Tel: 020 8223 6396
Email address: m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:

Dr. Mark Finn
School of Psychology
University of East London
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ.
Tel: 020 8223 4493
Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ionides

06/02/2015

Appendix 3.4: Invitation letter for teachers joining the main stage

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London E15 4LZ

Researcher: Maria Ionides
Contact Details: maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear Teacher

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist working with your school. As part of my Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology training at the University of East London I am carrying out a research project into collaboration between school staff and parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This letter tells you about this project and invites you to take part if you are interested.

The area and purpose of the research

The title of my research is: Values held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of pupils with SEND in the context of parent-school collaboration.

This means that I am interested to find out:

- What do school staff and parents think is important in children's education and upbringing?
- What are the differences and similarities in their views?
- Are these views held by the parents and school staff important for the quality of their collaboration?

The project is carried out in three schools.

The results of this project might give an insight into what do school staff and parents value in the parenting and education and whether these values are linked to the quality of parent-school collaboration. The results will be anonymously fed back to the school and to the

parents which I hope will encourage more mutual understanding and dialogue in situations when collaboration is considered to be difficult.

What does it involve?

- What: I would like to carry out two interviews with you (each 40 minutes long). During this time we will talk about what you find important in education and parenting.
- Where: I am able to see you in school.
- When: We will agree on a date and time convenient for you (during work days only) during September-October 2015.

If you have any further questions about this research I am happy to meet with you in person or you can call or email me (please see my contact details above).

When my research is completed (approximately November-December 2015) I will hold a workshop for school staff where I will present the research findings and discuss how we can promote mutual understanding, open dialogue and better collaboration between schools and parents. You will be very welcomed to join this workshop.

What will happen with the information you give?

Both interviews will be audio recorded so that I can include all the details of our conversation in my data analysis. Then the audio recordings will be typed up by external agency and analysed by myself to identify the main themes that came up in our conversation.

Anonymity

All the information you give me will be used anonymously (so that you cannot be identified). To ensure you anonymity I will do the following:

- When audio records are typed up and all the names will be replaced with pseudonyms.
- Audio records will be destroyed at the end of the project (August 2016). Typed up data will be destroyed three years after the project is completed (August 2019).
- All data will be stored on a password-protected computer. My research supervisors might have access to the typed up data to help me with data analysis. No one else will have access to these data.
- Reports and feedback that are produced as a result of this study will not include any information that can identify you (such as names, school and life circumstances).

Confidentiality

All data gathered will be strictly confidential: it will not be shared with any other participants or outside agencies unless obtained information suggests that someone might

be at risk of a significant harm. I will not discuss anything you told me with people other than my supervisors for the purposes other than data analysis.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to change your mind and quit the study (withdraw) at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without giving any reason. Should you withdraw after August 1st 2015, the researcher reserves the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor:

Dr Miles Thomas
School of Psychology
University of East London
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ.
Tel: 020 8223 6396
Email address: m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:

Dr. Mark Finn
School of Psychology
University of East London
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ.
Tel: 020 8223 4493
Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ionides

06/02/2015

Appendix 4: Consent form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London E15 4LZ

The Principal Investigator (researcher): Maria Ionides

Contact Details: maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Consent to participate in a research study: Personal constructs held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of children with special educational needs in the context of home-school collaboration.

I have read the information sheet about the research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about it. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that data from this research will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw later than 01 October 2015 the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data in the write-up of the study and in any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date:

Appendix 5: Thank you letter

Dear ...

Thank you for giving me your time to talk about your views on education. I hope you found this conversation interesting.

In case you might have any further queries on how to negotiate the support for your child with the school or with the Local Authority, here is contact details for two organisations who can provide you with independent advice and help:

Parent Partnership Service – independent service that provides parents of children with special needs with advice and support.
Contact details:

Telephone: 01223 699214

Email: pps@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pps

Pinpoint – an independent charity run by parents of children with SEND that provides support and guidance for parents.

Website: <http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/>

If you have any further questions regarding my research please do not hesitate to get in touch via my email:

maria.ionides@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Best wishes

Maria Ionides

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Thank you

Appendix 6: Ethical Approval from University of East London

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

SUPERVISOR: Miles Thomas

REVIEWER: Nicholas Wood

STUDENT: Maria Ionides

Title of proposed study: Personal constructs held about parenting and education by the school staff and parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the context of school-home collaboration.

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology

DECISION (*Delete as necessary*):

***APPROVED**

APPROVED: Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be

reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer):*

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments *(for students):*

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature):*

Student number:

Date:

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:



Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any):

Please do ensure your supervisor is aware when and where you are if researching within a parental home and confirm when you have safely left.

Reviewer *Dr. Nicholas Wood*

Date: 17th February 2015

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (moderator of School ethics approvals)

PLEASE NOTE:

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, travel approval from UEL (not the School of Psychology) must be gained if a researcher intends to travel overseas to collect data, even if this involves the researcher travelling to his/her home country to conduct the research. Application details can be found here: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/gradschool/ethics/fieldwork/>

Data gathering materials

Appendix 7: Focus Group schedule

Focus Group Script for parents and teachers (1.5h)

1. Hello, intro into the research, questions, consent forms signed
2. Purpose of the group and timings
3. Collaboration – definition from Oxford dictionary
4. What in your experience were the signs of good collaboration with the school (parents): how did it look, what did people do, how did you feel?
5. What in your experience were the signs of poor collaboration with the school (parents): how did it look, what did people do, how did you feel?
6. Last comments, questions
7. Next steps and thank you.

Appendix 8.1: Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) and Interview schedules in the area of education

Semi-structured interview about education, Repertory Grid technique (parent sample).

1. Reminder of the right to withdraw, skip questions, confidentiality and anonymity.
2. Repertory grid
 - Present 12 pictures of school situations, describe what we are going to do.
 - Selecting three pictures at random ask “thinking about education how two of these school situations are the same and different from the third one?”.
 - Replace one of the pictures with another one “Can you think of a *different* way in which two of these are the same and different from the third one?” Repeat for all pictures (ending up with 10 constructs). Keep identifying opposites to the constructs.
 - Ask the interviewee to score on the repertory grid:
 - i. thinking about education for your child or your own ideas about school, how do you think the “ideal school” would score on this grid? For example, on the scale between “grim corridors” and “bright classrooms” where the ideal school should be?
 - ii. Which member of school staff to you communicate the most with about support for your child?
 - iii. how do you think [school staff name] would score the “ideal school” – how do you think they view education?
3. Semi-structured interview:
 - What else that is really important for you in education for your child or in general can be added to this list if anything?
 - If I were to ask [member of school staff] what else is important for them in education – what do you think they would say? What would they add to this list?
 - Select 3 constructs from the grid that are most important for you. Tell a little bit more about what they mean to you and why they are important. Can you remember an occasion when this was particularly important for you?
 - Can you think of an example when you noticed the difference in your perspectives with this parent? What happened then?
 - Do you think that these beliefs affect the way you collaborate with the [member of school staff]? If yes, how?

Feedback on the session

Appendix 8.2: Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) and Interview schedules in the area of parenting

Semi-structured interview about parenting, based on Repertory Grid technique (parent sample).

1. Feedback on the experience of the first session. Validate my interpretation.
2. Reminder of the right to withdraw, skip questions, confidentiality and anonymity.
3. Repertory grid.
 - Ask the interviewee to select 12 parents of both genders whom they know well.
 - Select three people from the list at random ask “thinking about parenting, how two of these parents are the same and different from the third?”
 - Replace one of the people with another one: “Can you think of a different way in which two of these are the same and one is different?” Repeat for all selected names (ending up with 10 constructs). Keep identifying opposites to the constructs.
 - Ask the parent(s) to score on the repertory grid:
 - i. how do you think the “ideal parent” would score on this grid. For example, on the scale between “controlled temper” and “always mad” where the ideal parent should be?
 - ii. how do you think [school staff name] would score the “ideal parent” – what his/her expectations are?
4. Semi-structured interview:
 - What that is really important for you in parenting can be added to this list, if anything?
 - If I were to ask [member of school staff] what is most important in parenting – what else is important for them in parenting – what do you think they would say? What would they add to this list?
 - Select 3 constructs that are most important for you. Tell a little bit more about - what they mean to you and why they are important. Can you remember an occasion when this was particularly important for you?
 - Can you think of an example when you noticed the difference in your perspectives with this parent? What happened then?
 - Do you think that these beliefs affect the way you collaborate with the [member of school staff]? If yes, how?
5. Feedback on both sessions and next steps – feedback sheet.

Appendix 9: An example of filled in RGT

Date: 12/10/15

x- ideal school

Name: E

v- J's ideal school.

adult input					X	V					independence free to choose
* Having resources to refer to		X	V								no resources.
Outside / exploring environment			X		V						not still in the classroom.
* engaged in activities.	X										being not enjoying.
tips: new experiences			X	V							no tips / new experiences.
Sit down silence test						X			V		on-going assess-it.*
learning displays			X	V							Nothing on the walls.
Group work, interaction, talking						V	X				Sat in row, no interaction.
Finding out their own inform.					V		X				Always being given it.
Taking more responsibility for equipment				V	X						Having things given to them.
Sit-n-ask children to share & wait				X							Being allowed to call out & grab things.
small class meeting their needs through adult att-n	X	V									large classes.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Appendix 10.1: Quality of collaboration Likert scale (parent version)

Collaboration between school staff and parents around support for the student (parent version).

Your name:

Name of your child's school:

Date:

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The school staff and I have similar expectations about the resources available to support my child					
I trust the level of experience and SEN expertise of the school staff					
I feel that the school staff supports my child in all areas of child's development and not only with academic issues (seeing the whole picture)					
I feel that the school staff knows well my child's needs and do not generalize on the basis of any diagnosis.					
We agree with the school staff on the level of need experienced by the child					
There are enough opportunities to exchange information with the school staff on my child's progress and well-being					
I am satisfied with how the information about important decisions and incidents is shared with me.					
I feel that my child is included well enough into the classroom and other parts of school life (trips, social times, etc.)					
I feel welcomed to come in and see a member of staff whenever I need to.					
I feel that the school recognizes the pressures of being a parent and is able to flexibly meet the need of my child and our family					
My child is making some progress					
I that the school staff really understand my child: what motivates the child, what his/her abilities and needs are.					
I feel that the school staff is passionate about SEN					
We have trusting non-confrontational relationships with the school staff					
I attend meetings about my child					
At home I work towards targets agreed in school.					
I have to complain about school provision					
I feel either of the following: frustrated, intimidated or guilty.					

Thank you for your time!

Please provide the following information (you can skip any questions you do not wish to answer)

About your child:

1. Your child's age: _____

2. Areas of difficulties you child experiences in learning or his/her formal diagnoses:

About your family:

3. Your education

GCSE Grades G-D or Diploma Level 1

GCSE Grades C-A* or Diploma Level 2

A levels or Diploma Level 3

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

4. Are you currently employed? Yes No

If yes – what is your job? _____

5. Your ethnic background:

<p>White:</p> <p>1. English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British</p> <p>2. Irish</p> <p>3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller</p> <p>4. Any other White background, please describe</p>	<p>Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups</p> <p>5. White and Black Caribbean</p> <p>6. White and Black African</p> <p>7. White and Asian</p> <p>8. Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe</p>	<p>Asian/Asian British</p> <p>9. Indian</p> <p>10. Pakistani</p> <p>11. Bangladeshi</p> <p>12. Chinese</p> <p>13. Any other Asian background, please describe</p>
<p>Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British</p> <p>14. African</p> <p>15. Caribbean</p> <p>16. Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe</p>	<p>Other ethnic group</p> <p>17. Arab</p> <p>18. Any other ethnic group, please describe</p>	

Appendix 10.2: Quality of collaboration Likert scale (teacher version)
Collaboration between school staff and parents around support for the student (school staff version).

Your name:

Number of the family rated (please do not include any names!):

Date:

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Parents and school staff have similar expectations about the resources available to support the student					
Parents trust the level of experience and SEN expertise of the school staff					
Parents feel that school staff supports the child in all areas of child's development and not only with academic issues (seeing whole picture)					
Parents feel that the school staff knows well the individual child's need and do not generalize on the basis of diagnosis.					
School staff and parents agree on the level of need experienced by the child					
There are enough opportunities to exchange information with parents on the student's progress and well-being					
The students' parents are satisfied with how the information about important decisions and incidents is shared with them.					
Parents feel that their child is included well enough into the classroom and other parts of school life (trips, social times, etc.)					
Parents feel welcomed to come in and see a member of staff whenever they need to.					
Parents feel that the school recognizes the pressures of being a parent and is able to flexibly meet the need of their child and them as a family					
The child is making some progress					
Parents feel that the school staff really understand their child: what motivates them, what their abilities and needs are.					
Parents feel that the school staff is passionate about SEN					
There are trusting non-confrontational relationships between parents and school staff					
Parents attend meetings about their child					
At home parents work towards targets agreed in school.					
Parents complain about school provision					
School staff feel either of the following: hurt, defensiveness, frustration, nervousness					

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 11: School pictures used as elements for RGT







Audit trail for research design and data analysis

Appendix 12: Research diary extract

The extract shows a stage in making decision to use the concept of personal constructs on the basis of the purpose of the research.

15/11/14

Defining the BANANA.

	PC	values	attitudes	narratives
• Value laden	✓	✓	✓	? ✓
• Linked to everyday behaviour (actions)	✓ (in theory)	? ✓	✓	✓
• Informing how people set their priorities	?	?	?	?
• Highly individualised cognitive/emotional structures	✓	? =	✓	✓
• But also produced co-constructed with a group of people	?	✓	✓?	✓
• With theory/research technique attached to them	✓ Th ✓ Te	?	✓?	✓ ?
• Changeable	✓	?	✓	✓

Appendix 13: An example of amendments made after the pilot stage

Notes made on the interview schedule made in the process of piloting it with the pilot stage participant.

Scissors
paper

Semi-structured interview, education, based on Repertory Grid technique (parent sample).

1. Reminder of the right to withdraw, skip questions, confidentiality and anonymity.
2. Repertory grid.
 - Ask parents to select 12 parents of both genders whom they know well
 - Select three people from the list at random ask "thinking about parenting, how two of these parents are the same and one is different?". *Give example!*
 - Replace one of the people with another one: "Can you think of a different way in which two of these are the same and one is different?" Repeat...
 - Ask parent(s) to identify the opposite for each of the constructs. E.g. "you said that this parent controls her temper well. What would be the opposite of controlling the temper?"
 - Ask the parent(s) to score on the repertory grid:
 - i. how do you think the "ideal parent" would score on this grid. For example, on the scale between "controlled temper" and "always mad" where the ideal parent should be?
 - Imagine* → ii. how do you think [school staff name] would score the "ideal parent" – what his/her expectations are?
3. Semi-structured interview:
 - i. Select 3 constructs that are most important for you. Tell a little bit more about what they mean to you and why they are important.
 - ii. What do you really value in parenting that is not on this list, if any?
 - Imagine* → iii. If I were to ask [member of school staff] what is most important in parenting – what do you think they would say? Do you think they will add something else that is not on your list?
 - iv. What role do you think these beliefs about parenting play in your collaboration with the [school staff] or are they not relevant?
 - v. If they are relevant, how can they be used to improve collaboration?.

Feedback on both sessions and next steps – feedback sheet.

©

✘ Add numbers & X descriptions.

extend grid.

Similar beliefs -
- similar needs
or what
hinders a
how to achieve it

Appendix 14: An example of initial codes

A transcript page with hand-written notes of initial codes

Teacher-education-high-spald (Teacher 1)

62 I: Yeah, OK. Do you want to put one away and choose another one? *outdoor / indoor*

63 T1: Well again, they are outdoor, and that one's indoor. I would say out of those, that
64 those children are more focused, I mean they are all looking at something, they are
65 obviously intrigued by something, aren't they. There's real concentration going on,
66 there's one character, but the rest of them... *focused, interested*

67

68 I: Yup, as opposed to...

69

70 T1: I mean, they are, they are still looking, but that looks like it's interesting for them,
71 capturing imagination or else.

72 I: Yeah, and opposite to that would be sort of?

73 T1: Unfocused, unconcentration, interest level, I mean, I don't know whether that's an
74 outdoor activity that's linked to their topic, but you know, captures their imagination,
75 and obviously it's one step further, whereas these could be a lack of one off activity,
76 wouldn't they.

77 I: Mhm, OK, thank you, yeah.

78 T1: I'm gonna go for that one. That's obviously playtime, and that looks like more of
79 a...although it's outdoor, it's more of an adult-led activity, where obviously this is more
80 of a free play. *adult-led vs*

81 I: Free play vs. learning.

82 T1: Yeah. If they are gonna be learning, they're gonna be learning social skills, play,
83 different games they could play. And they're gonna be learning from their peers rather
84 than from an adult. Although there could be an adult leading the game out there but
85 doesn't look like it, does it. *free play, peer learning of social skills*

86 I: So here it's more about free play, social skills, learning from each other, while here
87 it's more about structure and something structured, yeah?

88 T1: Yes, yes. And very much adult-led, she's obviously leading that activity.

89 I: Yeah, fantastic.

90 T1: They're more social and that's an adult-led activity, and then that's gonna be taking
91 turns and table manners...I mean I don't know whether she's not got a space in there,
92 having to...

93 I: Negotiate...

94 T1: Yeah, negotiation skills, I don't know.

Appendix 15: An example of initial theme and the cycle of revision

Handwritten notes made on one of the initial themes in parenting beliefs:

<p>T1: I would say these ones would want to know if their child was struggling but also if their child was doing well, so they can celebrate it, whereas this one I think is just happy they're in school, does that make sense? (131)</p> <p>I: Right, so that's in a way, they are really asking for information from school...</p> <p>T1: Yeah, I mean it's not constant but it's more...yeah, I want to know, I want to celebrate things, I want to help them with bits that are... [...] whereas this one I think... I don't see as much of this one because they're working so therefore you're not able to impart the same amount of successes and...but yeah, I would say that one's more... "she's in school". [...] Doesn't matter... And I think they probably separate it a bit more...that's school, now we're home. [...] Whereas these ones I would say there's an extension to the day by doing homework and other things...</p> <p>I: Yes, that's interesting, like there's a big boundary there, that's home and that's school, OK...[writing down] separating. And well, this one it's an extension you said.</p> <p>T1: Well, yeah, I think so, whether it be growing things in the greenhouse, but you know, still educational. And this particular one, you know, they grow things in the greenhouse and then they make pickles, and then your end of term present would be a pickle they'd made, you know, you can tell it's...you know, it's like a whole thing, you know, part of a whole life really, it's compassing I suppose, you know. (158-184)</p> <p>T1: But obviously, even just reading every day, I don't know whether she's got better now, but, you know, the expectation is they read a little bit every single night, and it just wasn't happening, so, you know, we were doing it within school. (496-499)</p> <p>T2: very supportive parents, help with her homework, help with her reading...</p> <p>I: So very supportive of her education? T2: Of her education, yeah.</p>	<p>→ supporting school</p> <p>T1 & T2 → → school following school curricula at home & doing other educational stuff - visits/trips - cooking</p> <p>(T2) interaction with child (not TV)</p> <p>Support work of school → → improve chances in life (jobs/educ.)</p> <p>support for school</p>
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Data extracts	Codes	Importance
<p>What you call them – constellatory constructs: gender, age (old school / young), teacher / non-teacher, single / mum+dad, adopted / biological, working / stay at home, new parents / experienced.</p> <p>T1: I would say in this one...they are all the same in the sense that they all do a lot with their children at home. (...) I would say those two are more relaxed about it from that one. This one would like to know every detail of what was going on at school, whereas these two wouldn't. And worries about it, whereas these two wouldn't. (...) They all three do loads at home with their kids. (...) and I'd say, when they are doing stuff at home it's not quite so relaxed with that one as it is with those two. (...) That one is probably a little bit more...full-on, than these two...expectations are probably slightly higher here... (56-70)</p> <p>T1: And I would say, these from day dot, as soon as the children started school, they were with them, as in, they were following their education, what they need to do at home matching what was happening at school, whereas this one has taken a long time to take up that. Now she's into Key Stage 2, it's like, "ooh, I need to be doing more", and she should have been doing that...</p> <p>I: Yeah, ok. So it's does a lot at home and matches school...</p> <p>T1: Yeah, expectations, curriculum...everything, 'cos they are prepared to find out. (...) All three of these, I've given them...different ends of the spectrum, but I've given them things to do at home to match what they are doing at school; this gets done, this doesn't always. This will get done to a higher standard, this won't... (82-92)</p> <p>T1: This one does a lot more with their child out of school, arranges things, whether it's out of school clubs, like Rainbows, that sort of thing, I think gymnastics and all other sorts of things, and this one does, or has begun to, but this one doesn't. Doesn't do anything out of school</p> <p>I: Yeah. Do you think it's something... something about how the parent...or is it just sort of happens this way, so what does it mean for them as a parent, what sort of parent they are?</p> <p>T1: I think the child is saying "no", because the offer's there, the child's saying "no", the parents aren't prepared to push, they'll just leave it.</p> <p>I: Yeah, OK. So, those parents, they are a bit more, like...</p> <p>T1: Yeah, they do all sorts of... this one, probably only over the last year but this one's always done it. And even,</p>	<p>Check re: expectations = pressure T1</p> <p>Parents doing educational activities at home:</p> <p>T1 – doing them in a relaxed way / doing them in a more enforced, high expectation, stressed way. Following curriculum, finding out. <= home – continuation of school / separate home from school. Education at home => progress (brighter ones) in class. & parent-school partnership.</p> <p>→ supporting school, T1.</p> <p>(T1) "full-on" → higher expectations</p> <p>→ collaboration with school fluid home-school boundary</p>	<p>T1 T2</p> <p>not with no pressure</p> <p>P5</p>

The revised theme. Revisions made on the basis of the notes (see above):

Data extracts	Theme description	Importance
<p>T1: I would say in this one...they are all the same in the sense that they all do a lot with their children at home. (...)I would say those two are more relaxed about it from that one. This one would like to know every detail of what was going on at school, whereas these two wouldn't. And worries about it, whereas these two wouldn't. (...) They all three do loads at home with their kids. (...) and I'd say, when they are doing stuff at home it's not quite so relaxed with that one as it is with those two. (...) That one is probably a little bit more...full-on, than these two...expectations are probably slightly higher here... (56-70)</p> <p>T1: And I would say, these from day dot, as soon as t</p> <p>he children started school, they were with them, as in, they were following their education, what they need to do at home matching what was happening at school, whereas this one has taken a long time to take up that. Now she's into Key Stage 2, it's like, "ooh, I need to be doing more", and she should have been doing that...</p> <p>I: Yeah, ok. So it's does a lot at home and matches school...</p> <p>T1: Yeah, expectations, curriculum...everything, 'cos they are prepared to find out. (...) All three of these, I've given them...different ends of the spectrum, but I've given them things to do at home to match what they are doing at school; this gets done, this doesn't always. This will get done to a higher standard, this won't... (82-92)</p> <p>T1: This one does a lot more with their child out of school, arranges things, whether it's out of school clubs, like Rainbows, that sort of thing, I think gymnastics and all other sorts of things, and this one does, or has begun to, but this one doesn't. Doesn't do anything out of school</p> <p>I: Yeah. Do you think it's something... something about how the parent...or is it just sort of happens this way, so what does it mean for them as a parent, what sort of parent they are?</p> <p>T1: I think the child is saying "no", because the offer's there, the child's saying "no", the parents aren't prepared to push, they'll just leave it.</p> <p>I: Yeah, OK. So, those parents, they are a bit more, like...</p>	<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Parents spending time with children (involved, hands-on, talking, interacting, playing, helping with school work):</p> <p>T1 – doing educational activities that support progress in school: in a relaxed way / worrying about it. home – continuation of school / separate home from school.</p> <p>Education at home => progress (brighter ones) in class. & parent-school partnership.</p> <p>T2 – reading and doing homework at home, particularly for children with SEN → progress and better chances later in life.</p> <p>S1: specifically interaction through rich language – talking things through / no communication, talking at children, not talking things through.</p> <p>Good communication: Develops language skills (success in school – social, learning, emotional...) Develops parent-child bond</p>	<p>T1 T2 S1 P6 P5 P7</p>

T1: Yeah, they do all sorts of... this one, probably only over the last year but this one's always done it. And even, I mean...yeah, this one [the one who does not push] still has friends around but these two have friends around and then they do ballet and rainbows, and loads of other things... whereas there is nothing there, no swimming, nothing. I think one of these [other two parents] does swimming and...all sorts of out of school activities... (114-131)

T1: I would say all-round they do more with their kids in sense of out of school stuff, growing stuff in their garden, you know, their kids are involved all the time.

I: So they involve their children?

T1: Yeah, it's very family-oriented. Family-oriented holiday, you know, it's all...geared around their kids there, all their life...

I: Is it something about, like, stimulating their children all the time, is that's what it's about?

T1: Yes, so, these particular parents had a concern about their child to do with their maths, they came and spoke to me and then they took it away, and it was all done in a fun way so the child didn't know they were learning...but it's what they needed if that makes sense.

I: (...) And then the opposite of that would be...

T1: Nothing, haha. No, I think they do, but it's not like that. (...) I think it's more...stick them in front of the telly. (136-155)

T1: I would say these ones would want to know if their child was struggling but also if their child was doing well, so they can celebrate it, whereas this one I think is just happy they're in school, does that make sense?

I: Right, so that's in a way, they are really asking for information from school...

T1: Yeah, I mean it's not constant but it's more...yeah, I want to know, I want to celebrate things, I want to help them with bits that are... [...] whereas this one I think... I don't see as much of this one because they're working so therefore you're not able to impart the same amount of successes and...but yeah, I would say that one's more..."she's in school". [...] Doesn't matter... And I think they probably separate it a bit more...that's school,

P6: as a way of building bond

**Time together → better relationship → will be happier to talk about their problems + respect you + better bond and wish to spend time together in the future.
Vs not spending time together**

P5: time together → bond and better knowledge of the child → we are family there for her → confidence to speak to the parent, not distant, or feeling intimidated to talk.

Vs not spending time together, being separate.

**P7: being involved → knowing the child → being able to support in tricky situations.
vs distant**

Wanting to know them → good relationships and closeness is rewarding → having a sense of a team, helping each other out, working together → having someone there to help you, emotionally close and supportive → child feeling safe and secure → growing up into an independent person.

<p>now we're home. [...] Whereas these ones I would say there's and extension to the day by doing homework and other things...</p> <p>I: Yes, that's interesting, like there's a big boundary there, that's home and that's school, OK...[writing down] separating. And well, this one it's an extension you said.</p> <p>T1: Well, yeah, I think so, whether it be growing things in the greenhouse, but you know, still educational. And this particular one, you know, they grow things in the greenhouse and then they make pickles, and then your end of term present would be a pickle they'd made, you know, you can tell it's...you know, it's like a whole thing, you know, part of a whole life really, it's compassing I suppose, you know. (158-184)</p> <p>T1: But obviously, even just reading every day, I don't know whether she's got better now, but, you know, the expectation is they read a little bit every single night, and it just wasn't happening, so, you know, we were doing it within school. (496-499)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>T2: very supportive parents, help with her homework, help with her reading...</p> <p>I: So very supportive of her education?</p> <p>T2: Of her education, yeah.</p> <p>I: [...] And what is opposite to that, how another one might be different?</p> <p>T2: [...] Erm, so parents that, opposite are parents that don't read with their children at home...</p> <p>I: So those like, read at home?</p> <p>T2: Yeah, help with homework, these ones.</p> <p>I: And they don't read?</p> <p>T2: Don't read to their children, don't support their children, their homework. (68-87)</p> <p>T2: [pause.....] Does things for children at the weekend like go to visit places, not just sit at home, watch tv. Actually, go out and experience different things. [...] like go to a museum, go to a farm...</p> <p>I: And opposite to that would be...</p>		
---	--	--

T2: Not taking their children out and about. So children not... some children don't always...don't see any further than, like, their village. They don't get any experiences of... (120-128)

T2: [long pause] I've talked about experiences erm... hands on experiences in the home, so actually being involved in the cooking, gardening... [...] So being involved in....

I: Home life.

T2: Home life, yeah. Not just sitting in front of a tv and being given food, so having, you know, taken part in maybe baking erm... baking... doing some gardening...washing up...

I: Yeah, OK. So being involved in home life like baking and gardening, and you said that opposite to that is just sitting in front of the TV and...

T2: Yeah, so not having that interaction with the child, because if the child's put in front of the TV it's not...they're not interacting with their parents, while baking involves talking and doing things together, so this is more solitary. (160-171)

T2: I think it's [supporting education at home] important that they help their child at home and in school because their education is their future in path (??) in life and helping them become, helping them go further in life, obviously education is a lot of the child's...is a whole of the child's life, from the age of four, and unfortunately, you know, we don't have time in school with the child to do everything we need to do... Especially if the child needs a bit more support, it's important parents have the time to do things with them.

I: Yeah. So it's about improving future chances for this child?

T2: Yes, yeah.

I: And are you talking...what sort of future chances are you talking about, how it will improve child's future?

T2: In terms of future education, so when they get older and do GCSE levels, and also their chances of jobs in the future too. (360-374)

SENCo1: [...] very much talking dads,[...]. So when I was young and his children were young, they would read the bedtime stories, they would do the talking. They would talk through, if you asked a question, they would give you the answer and an explanation. It is a trait of teachers, I know that [laughter]. [name] and my dad were teachers and that was pointed out to me. But there so much language came from them. [name], my sister-in-law, I-I don't th-, she talks, but she talks, this is gonna sound, quite an "in-lawy" thing to say, she talks at people, she doesn't necessarily expect anything back, in fact, what you have got to say back is irrelevant 'cause she just wants to say what she has to say and that's that. [...] They-they, they used language to explain and model... Whereas [sister-in-law] uses language, even now, um, just as a method, a means of expressing her opinion. (50-71)

SENCo1: Being in the job I do, I know that having a good vocabulary, having good listening skills, having good conversation skills is key to everything. And without those, children do underperform. There's no doubt about it. But also, having that conversation with your child, having the eye contact, having the facial expression, the body language, is all tying that parent-child bond tighter and tighter and showing them what good communication is.

I: Yeah yes. So it's about bonds as well?

SENCo1: It's-it's about, it underpins everything and the worst thing in the world is seeing a young mum with a baby, and she's on her phone. And the child is gazing up on her mum and she's just... that breaks my heart. Um, language is the key to success, it really is. In every way, emotional, psychological, if you can express yourself, if you can talk to somebody, you'll be fine.

P6: These two are the same because they don't spend as much time with the children, all the time, whereas this person does.

I: [...] and what's opposite you said of spending time with your kids?

P6: Spending very little time with your children, not doing much with them at all. (155-161)

P6: I think spending time with children is definitely important, without a doubt, and in this day and age we don't spend enough time with the children, because you can't find the time to do it. I do try and spend as much time as I possibly can, like for holidays and...and things like that, but it just...makes you relationship so much better. Between you and your children. If you don't talk to each other, then they're not gonna come to you and talk to

you and they're not gonna, you know, bother to come to you with their problems and things like that, so I do try my hardest to do that for my children in a way.

I: [...] And what do you think it gives them and you when you have good relationships?

P6: Well, I would hope it actually gives you respect. Don't really get that much from Ch6, but I do from my daughter, so... but I think obviously Ch6 is that bit different, he's not really getting there at the minute but I do get it from my daughter and she helps out with things and you ask her to do something and she'll do it, and in fact Ch6 does to a certain extent as well...

P6: [...] Yeah. I'd like to think, you know, if we do spend the time together and we have fun together, then they'll want to do that more in the future, and want to spend time together like going on a holiday together and things, so.

I: Yeah, yeah, so it's about sort of closeness with the child and...

P6: It is, yeah, yeah. [...] I want to be friends with them but at the same time their role-model. (405-439)

P5: Yeah, they are more hands on than what the dad is I would say. [...] They will sit down with them and do homework with them, while they: "sit down, there is your work, I explain what to do and dot. Go!" They will sit down, they will spend that little bit of time playing or explaining or doing rather than... he is a nice man, but he's not, he'll put it down and go 'there is your work, he explains, I'm over here if you need me' and disappear in the other side of the room.

I: Yeah yeah, so those parents they spend a bit more time doing things with?

P5: Yeah, with the children, yeah.

I: And how would you say, what's the opposite of being hands on and spending time playing and doing things?

P5: Being on the other side, just, either give them work or just not being there, not supervising... (94-110)

P5: [...] they spend more time with their children, not just, Monday-Friday, but weekend as well, you know, it's mum's duty to do it Monday to Friday and all weekend and every day of the week. But sometimes it should be dad's turn to take over, but mum still sits there. Do you see what I mean? Rather than.... Hang on a moment... where am I going with this? [...] Just...they're always there, they're never going out, just themselves, to leave

dad, they'll always bring dad and child with them. [...] If dad wanted to go out at the weekend, to shop or to walk the dog, he'd go on his own. If mum wanted to go to the shop or walk the dog, mum would go with child, or drag the dad along with, does that make sense?

I: Yeah yea, so, is it something about not, they don't want to leave their children, or they really enjoy their time together?

P5: I think it's probably a bit of both, I'd say it's definitely a bit of both, yeah. [...] To get out doing stuff, or just sit in doing stuff but mum will always be lingering about, you know.

I: [...] OK, and what, how would you describe what's opposite to that?

P5: Opposite? Er...leaving the child at home and doing what you would do, but you could do it with the child, if it's walking the dog or going to the shop, leaving them behind I suppose, or just getting on with, like, day to day chores, getting them involved would be what they would do; if he was doing day-to-day chores he'll do it on his own, peace and quiet, it's done, I think. (202-246)

P5: Er, going out as a family I think is quite important, not just mum or just dad, all four or three, together I think is very important, definitely days out.

I: So parents who go out as a family. And what's opposite to that you would say?

P5: not doing stuff together, not going out as such, but maybe just not doing things together. I mean, don't get me wrong, we have our lazy days, but we will still get the arts and crafts out, we will still do a bit of gaming inside, we will still do little things inside. [...] Together, yeah, rather than separating each other. OK, we do have to separate sometimes at the weekend 'cause they get a bit intense, but no, I think, yeah, just spending time together, it is quite nice. (446-458)

P5: Family time for me is really important. [...] Because it's getting to know her, you know, we don't, she's at school all day, so don't learn anything about her at school, you sort of, the more you do it, the more you go 'oh, she has enjoyed that', or 'she didn't enjoy that', or 'she finds that tricky'. I think it's spending quality time helps, well not establish just a bond between us and obviously my husband because he's obviously at work all day, but between us all together, we sort of learn a little bit more about each other the more we spend with each other doing stuff.

I: Yeah. And what do you think it gives you, or gives Ch5 when you learn a bit more about each other?

P5: It creates confidence. If we look silly, doesn't matter if she looks a bit silly, do you know what I mean, if we're going through the park throwing leaves and she's like 'oh, wow, they look stupid doing this, so I can join them on', erm, confidence and knowing that we're here I suppose, as a family, you know, if she's confident and... she knows we're there, I suppose she can speak to us a bit more, rather than if we're not with them all the time or don't talk to her or don't spend time ', but we're a bit distinct, a bit separated I suppose. [...] more connected I suppose, yeah.

I: So that people can talk to each other if something's not right?

P5: Yeah, yeah, rather than feeling intimidated 'cause you haven't got that little bond with you. 'cause I remember, really my dad, I felt really awkward talking with my dad about stuff, 'cause we weren't connected, so I suppose we're trying to build that with Ch5 and her brother, I think, yeah. (567-596)

P7: I'll tell you one, there is an age difference, and this one is a lot older, so I would assume his parenting skills are, his parenting, the way he sees it are probably different to how young ones see it.

I: Yeah, what's the difference you think?

P7: Err, I would say he is more sort of old school as in partly maybe a little bit stricter, having said that, he is very easy going; I would imagine he is a bit stricter and he maybe didn't have a full role in being the father

I: so a bit more distant?

P7: a bit more distant, yes, he would be the one that had to work, so he perhaps wouldn't, I don't want to say get to know the child as well but, wouldn't know the child's ins and outs, totally...

P7: [...] Younger parents I think these days, with the people that I know anyway, tend to share parenting more... even though, I think with most of the people I know it's still the husband who goes out to work, the wife may still work but not as many hours so it's a husband that still does the majority of the work, but the way that they split their time up, the husband tends to spend more time with the children, such things like taking them swimming, things that perhaps older fathers didn't do, certainly the ones that I know, you know, taking them out to kick the football around, things like that...

<p>I: Yeah, yeah, so it's more involved...</p> <p>P7: Yeah, more involved in the upbringing</p> <p>I: And as a result do you feel that they know the children a bit better?</p> <p>P7: Yes, I do. (31-70)</p> <p>P7: But at the same time he's very loving and very playful with them, and he will take them places and build things for them and, you know, he's a really nice dad, but he is strict as well. (135-136)</p> <p>P7: I don't think he is as engaged with his children; having said that, he does has a very busy job so he's not always around... (159-160)</p> <p>P7: Actually, these two are a lot older. As I said, they were brought up in similar times, and they, I don't think they were quite as involved with their children as in getting on the floor and playing with them, as this one would be. I think these were brought up in a time when the housewife, cos that's what they were, did housework first, and then if there was time left, they would play with children. My late mother-in-law used to say that to me all the time, she'd say, 'In my days you did your housework first, and then if there was time, you'd play with the child'. [...] I used to say "well dust will always be there", so...</p> <p>I: [...] While you feel that for another one, time with children comes first.</p> <p>P7: Yeah, definitely. And I think as far as....like this one is always going on trips out with the children, these two I don't think, well I think they've rarely went out with their children... It may have been because financially they couldn't really afford to go to all these places, and then, there are more places available these days as well, anyway. (208-230)</p> <p>P7: Right, so this is an older man as well... he was definitely one of the "go out to work...don't really engage with the children". And when he came home at night, he had to have his tea in silence and nobody was allowed to scream... [...] but having said that he would do anything for his children. [...] And now he's got grandchildren, he'll roll around the floor and play with them, really devoted grandfather.</p> <p>I: Oh, how interesting. Ok, and how would the others be different?</p>		
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P7: Errr... [thinking] well those two go together because of the era that they were parenting and they're still parenting now, but when they had small children, yes, she's definitely different than them, because she is just more relaxed I suppose.

I: Yeah, so it's something about being relaxed as opposite to being...

P7: [...] Not hands on, yes. Yehah, Yeah, I would say both of them in a way were not hand on, both of these... (238-269)

P7: I can see, yeah, I could put these two together because she's quite strict, she's got definite boundaries, but at the same time she's very very involved with the children, and very loving, so I wouldn't put her with the other one for that. (280-282)

P7: But at the same time he's very loving and very playful with them, and he will take them places and build things for them and, you know, he's a really nice dad, but he is strict as well. (142-143)

P7: Right, so this is an older man as well... he was definitely one of the "go out to work...don't really engage with the children". And when he came home at night, he had to have his tea in silence and nobody was allowed to scream... [...] but having said that he would do anything for his children. [...] And now he's got grandchildren, he'll roll around the floor and play with them, really devoted grandfather. (238-246)

P7: ...this one, as I said, he's quite strict, sometimes a bit too strict I think but... he's one for taking away privileges if they're naughty, err, he's actually ex-military so... ha ha. [...] But at the same time he's very loving and very playful with them, and he will take them places and build things for them and, you know, he's a really nice dad, but he is strict as well. (140-145)

P7: Immediately I'd put those two together because she is an inexperienced parent, she's only just had her first baby, so she is wanting to feed him all the time. [...] Yeah, sort of very easy-going with him...she is just totally focused on him, her world just revolves around him, so I would put those two together because of them being so into their children; this one, she is into her children, she is very very into them, but she just comes across as very much more experienced, and she knows when to say no, and when she says no she means no, their children don't play her up, they've just been brought to respect their parents (309-314).

I: [...] why you see being involved with your child, why do you think it's important, what does it give you?

P7: I think you've got to get to know their personality and the way they think and how they might react to things, what they like, what they don't like... just so that you know your child and you can...that will probably help you guide them through certain things in early childhood, through life... [...] if you've got a child who is particularly shy, and they get invited to some big party, and you're aware that they may not want to go to that party because you know what their personality is like...if you're very distant from them, you don't know what they like and what they dislike...and you know, as they get older, what current thing they're into...

P7: [...] I think you just need to know them because they live with you and they're part of you, you know, you've got to get to know them as much as possible [laughter], because once they are teenagers that's it, they go all shut and you don't know them very well ha ha.

P7: [...] but it hits back to you, doesn't it, cos if you feel like you've got a really good relationship with your child and that you're close to them, it's sort of a reward for you as well.

I: Yes. So it's important to know your child, would you say to feel this closeness that... something about just being family and being close to each other...and then you mentioned that it will also help you to sort of help them in situations that might be difficult because you will know...

P7: Yes.

I: And I know it sounds stupid but why is it important for you to be close as a family?

P7: Err...because we're a team [laughter]. You know, we quite often say to our daughter, we do things, we are a team, we all help each other, you know. If we ask her to do something and she sort of goes 'don't want to do that...' we say, well you know, we all live here, we've all got to work together.

I: yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's important to have a strong unit, a strong team? People helping each other, yeah. Is that more or less what family is about to you?

P7: I think so, yes, it's the... and when you look at sort of the extended family as well, yeah, it's all about everybody helping each other and... just being part of the big team [laughter].

I: And err.... Again I am going to ask that, why is it important to be a team as a family, I know it's a bit hard sometimes to think, to get so abstract, well why – teams are good [laughter]...

<p>P7: Yeah. Well, I think it's just that you always know that there's somebody there that could help you or listen to you...you know, there's someone to fall back on. [...] So it's nice to build that with a child to build them into...to become part of the bigger picture. [...] we...distance-wise we are not very close to our family, we are sort of two hours away from my parents and we were eleven hours away cos we were living in the North Scotland... Ch7 was born in Scotland so...big distance, but it doesn't stop us being emotionally close. [...] supportive. I think the thing about raising a child is to raise them to feel safe and secure, and to become an independent person and being part of your family team and getting to know them all helps towards that. (597-675)</p>		
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Appendix 16: An example of the final list of themes

The “importance” column lists participants who indicated that this theme is highly important for them. For the purposes of presentation, data extracts were removed from the table.

Theme description	Importance
<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Parents spending time with children (involved, hands-on, talking, interacting, playing, helping with school work):</p> <p>T1 – doing educational activities that support progress in school: in a relaxed way / worrying about it. home – continuation of school / separate home from school.</p> <p>Education at home => progress (brighter ones) in class. & parent-school partnership.</p> <p>T2 – reading and doing homework at home, particularly for children with SEN → progress and better chances later in life.</p> <p>S1: specifically interaction through rich language – talking things through / no communication, talking at children, not talking things through.</p> <p>Good communication: Develops language skills (success in school – social, learning, emotional...) Develops parent-child bond</p> <p>P6: as a way of building bond</p> <p>Time together → better relationship → will be happier to talk about their problems + respect you + better bond and wish to spend time together in the future. Vs not spending time together</p> <p>P5: time together → bond and better knowledge of the child → we are family there for her → confidence to speak to the parent, not distant, or feeling intimidated to talk. Vs not spending time together, being separate.</p>	<p>T1 T2 S1 P6 P5 P7</p>

<p>P7: being involved → knowing the child → being able to support in tricky situations. vs distant</p> <p>Wanting to know them → good relationships and closeness is rewarding → having a sense of a team, helping each other out, working together → having someone there to help you, emotionally close and supportive → child feeling safe and secure → growing up into an independent person.</p>	
<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Behaviour expectations and boundaries.</p> <p>T1. S2: poor boundaries at home → bad behaviour in school.</p> <p>T1: high / low expectations about behaviour.</p> <p>T1: Good behaviour → leaning and letting others learn.</p> <p>S2: Boundaries → knowing what's allowed and what's not → good behaviour → fitting in school /society --> becoming a good adult and feeling safe.</p> <p>BUT also not moulding them into the society, helping to be confident in who they are if they are different.</p> <p>Boundaries being flexible depending on the child's ability to control behaviour, but very strict safety rules.</p> <p>Being in control of their boundaries being linked to helping child to develop independence and ability to stay safe in different situations (see below)</p> <p>S1: behaviour expectations are the same for their kids and for other kids. / doting on their kids (?)</p> <p>T2: consistent boundaries between 2 homes; parents - positive role models; parents "pretending" they have boundaries.</p> <p>T2: parents – positive role models → child knows how to behave in public → supports good society.</p> <p>P6: strict (doing as you are told), having respect (e.g. helping) / flexible, lenient.</p>	<p>T1 T2 S2 S1 P6 P7</p>

<p>P5: letting get away with things, laid back / putting flexible limits down.</p> <p>P5: being strict with rules and routines (structures) but also fun a bit flexible → needed for the child to follow routine → better behaviour</p> <p>P7: lack of boundaries (anything for an easy life) → stress. doting vs knowing how to put limits down, not being afraid of upsetting child. Linked to experienced / unexperienced parent.</p> <p>P7: being very consistent and firm, but loving and involved. Need not to be afraid to tell someone off, know that it's OK and they will still love you. Consistency! / focused on the child, giving in, letting get away with things.</p> <p>Boundaries and being told off for certain things → having manners and respect → respecting authority → being good citizen → making better society.</p> <p>Experience → better boundaries. Lack of boundaries → stress.</p>	
<p>Theme 3</p> <p>Closeness, bond with the child, or bond as a whole family (family-team, emotional support)</p> <p>P6: Time together → relationships → able to talk and wanting to spend time together</p> <p>P5: time together → bonding as a family and learning about each other → being able to talk, not feel intimidated; we are there for her.</p> <p>P7: relationship with the child is rewarding. Also → close as a family-team, supporting, helping each other, emotional closeness → security so that child can grown and become independent.</p> <p>S1: parent-child interactions → better bond → teaching child good communication skills → basis for emotional well-being and success in life.</p> <p>S2: for adopted child – importance of developing relationships (“showing love”).</p>	<p>P5 P6 P7 S1 S2</p>

<p>SENCo2 – love can take different forms. Setting boundaries and unconditional support – good; giving lots of presents – bad. “you are there for them” → to feel secure, go out into the world, knowing they have secure base to come back to.</p>	
<p>Theme 4</p> <p>Parents interested in talking with their children about their experiences and problems.</p> <p>S2: parent-friend, being able to discuss things / not there for you.</p> <p>S1: knowing child’s experiences, psychologically, safety monitoring (not intruding) / not engaged with children → damaging long term.</p> <p>T2: asking child about their day in school, their emotions / not having time for the child.</p> <p>P6: spending time together and talking → relationships → they can come and talk to you if they have problems.</p> <p>P5: ensuring child knows they can come and talk about problems in school and parent takes it on board.</p>	<p>P6 P7 S1 S2</p>
<p>Theme 5</p> <p>Patience</p> <p>T1: authoritative (do as I say!) / child-centred (let’s discuss it).</p> <p>S1: black and white, hard on children / warning before telling off, calmer, more relaxed.</p> <p>P6: low patience, snap quickly, aggressive / very patient, laid back (but with boundaries), don’t shout as much.</p> <p>P6: patience → nice, warm, calm relationships; better behaviour; child is not frightened.</p> <p>P5: high patience (taking time, staying calm) / low patience (reacting quickly, negativity)</p>	<p>P6, P5, S1</p>

<p>P5: patience → child does not feed of negativity → better behaviour and learning to be patient herself; not getting frustrated with tasks → feeling proud she did it.</p>	
<p>Theme 6</p> <p>Roles of mother and father, partnership between parents.</p> <p>S2: mother being in charge of discipline while dad is away working.</p> <p>S1: one parent (mother or father) not having an active role or actively undermined / complete partnership.</p> <p>Important to agree on approach → consistent boundaries, so that the child does not play parents against each other; and children seeing good relationships between parents.</p> <p>P6: important to have both male and female role models → diversity of approaches for the child → child can compare and choose their own way.</p> <p>P7: “old-school” dad is away at work (mother doing house work) / “new generation” – more balanced roles. parents disagreeing → child less sure of themselves. Agreeing on approach / arguing in front of the child.</p> <p>Parents disagreeing → confused and not secure child. United front → child will grow up to parent in the same way as s/he was parented.</p>	<p>S1, P7, P6?</p>
<p>Theme 7</p> <p>Parents knowing the child (closely linked to having conversations, spending time together).</p> <p>Knowing child’s character, likes and dislikes (or background if adopted) / not knowing it. → knowing how to support and respond.</p>	<p>S1 S2 P5 P7</p>

<p>Theme 8</p> <p>Making sure child is growing up feeling secure and confident in themselves.</p> <p>Making sure child is happy (in school), emotionally secure.</p> <p>T1: children happy in school → able to concentrate on work → learning (it's my job!); knowing how to learn, having the grounding → achieving, progressing, succeeding → able to do what they want to do later in life.</p>	<p>T1 S2</p>
<p>Theme 9</p> <p>Approach to parenting: structured and organised or laid back, spontaneous.</p> <p>S2: controlling, structured / having few rules, not controlling.</p> <p>P6: Methodical / organised parenting or going with the flow</p> <p>P6: being organised → getting through the day; teaching skill to succeed in the future; that's how I am.</p> <p>P5: planning ahead / spontaneous (linked to the child's need for structure?)</p>	<p>P6 P5</p>
<p>Theme 10</p> <p>Giving children control, supporting independence and growth</p> <p>S2: finding the right balance between controlling children, close supervision and letting them be in control – giving more control as they become more independent.</p> <p>SENCo2: Controlling → supervising children and teaching them how to respond in difficult situations → staying safe and independent when they are older. "I'm a controlling person"</p>	<p>SENCo2 S1 P6</p>

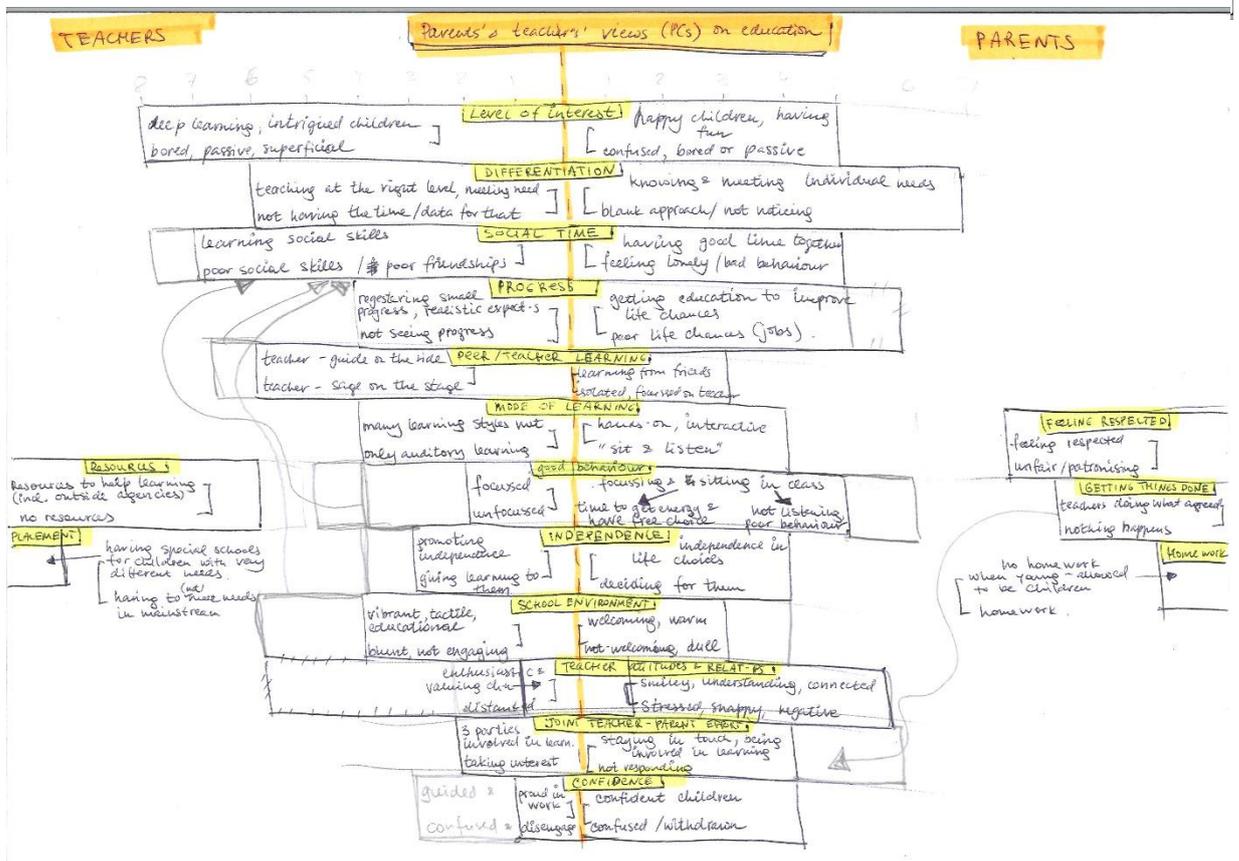
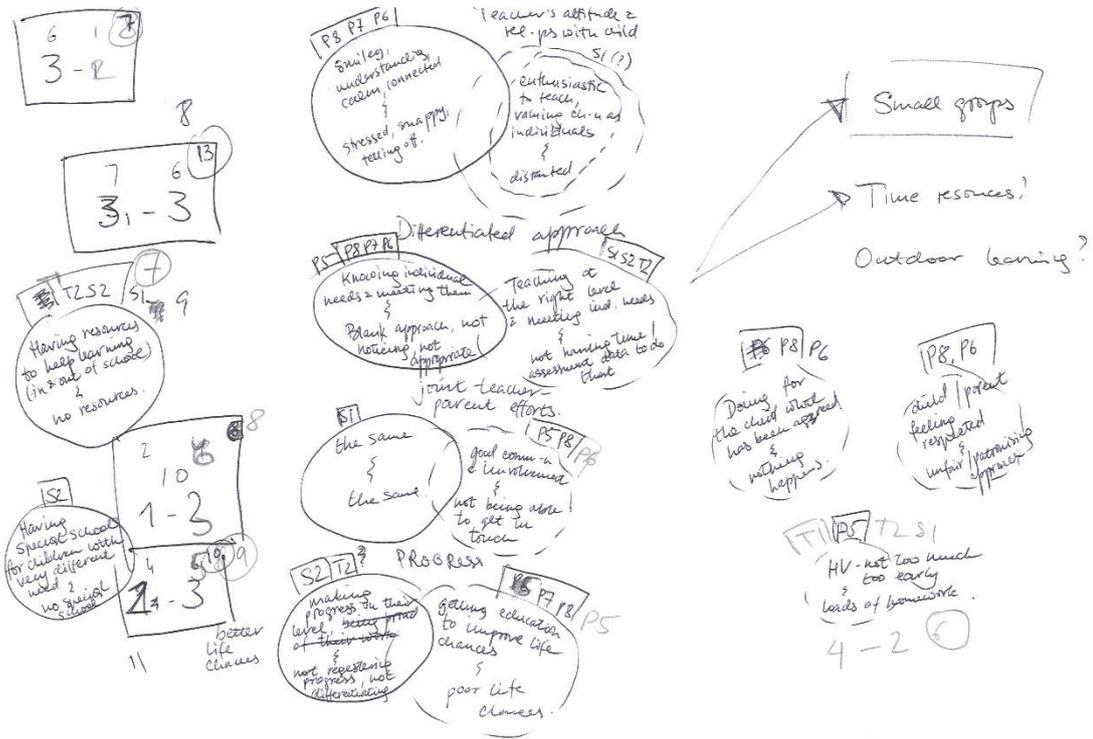
<p>S1: not intruding but supporting, not demanding answers. Control – important but never had to be enforced with her kids... Control: happening naturally and peacefully or having to be enforced (like a dog on a lead). Giving them control over not dangerous choices – teaching to make independent decisions.</p>	
<p>Theme 11</p> <p>Supporting the child to become a good member / fit into the society</p>	<p>S2 P7 T2</p>
<p>Theme 12</p> <p>Levels of stress:</p> <p>S2: laid back / worrying about every decision</p> <p>T1: relaxed / worried about progress</p> <p>P5: Laid-back, not bothered by the mess / rushing around doing things</p> <p>P7: stressed because kids don't do what she expects (lack of boundaries)</p>	
<p>Theme 13</p> <p>Supporting children to achieve, full fill their potential, set on a good path in life. Expectations of progress, aspirations for the future and support to achieve, develop.</p> <p>T1: worrying about progress, having high expectations, not relaxed / still doing a lot at home but being relaxed about that.</p> <p>T1: setting expectations on progress, planning how to get there, thinking one step ahead / “coasting”</p> <p>T1: planning one step ahead → child achieving (it's my job)</p>	<p>T1 SEnCo1</p>

<p>T1: planning ahead (with no pressure), making sure they can learn → progress and have grounding in learning → achieve and succeed in life.</p> <p>S1: Aspirations: high / low Language: talking through / not talking through Pressure: no pressure / pressure Job: successful, happy in it / good if it pays. Belief: that God controls what happens / success has to be fought for.</p> <p>T2: parents need to support children with education at home → improve their future chances (qualifications, jobs)</p>	
<p>Theme 14</p> <p>Supporting school with learning and behaviour</p> <p>T1: doing activities that match school curriculum and expectations; finding out about how to support the child; making sure they have all the equipment</p> <p>Vs</p> <p>Not doing anything like that. Sat in front of the TV. Equipment not monitored.</p> <p>T2: doing reading and home-work, agreeing re: behaviour / sat in front of TV, blaming school for bad behaviour.</p>	<p>T1 T2</p>
<p>Theme 15</p> <p>Basic care: health, sleep etc.</p> <p>T2: looking presentable → more confident within themselves, not picked on → more willing to try things.</p>	<p>T2, T1</p>
<p>Theme 16 – miscellaneous</p> <p>Huggy-kissy – reserved parents</p>	<p>P5</p>

<p>Theme 16 – miscellaneous</p> <p>Socialising with other parents and children or isolated</p>	<p>P5</p>
<p>Theme 16 – miscellaneous</p> <p>Parenting – a balancing act</p> <p>S2: Having to balance kids, work, small support network / staying at home (good or bad), being flexible with work.</p> <p>S1: having to juggle kids and work / able to stay at home with no distraction from her kids</p> <p>Doting on children, putting them at the centre of adult life</p> <p>Or</p> <p>S2: having to compromise, balance attention and time (working / other kids) or being bored at home all the time.</p> <p>S1: distant, removed</p> <p>S1: children need to know there should be a balance...</p>	<p>S2</p>
<p>Theme 16</p> <p>Religious (Christian) parents – not religious:</p> <p>Children’s paths in life are out of my control – controlled by a higher being vs chances have to be fought for.</p>	

Appendix 17: Examples of refinements made to graphic thematic maps

Drafts of graphic thematic maps representing educational beliefs



Appendix 18.1: Initial themes for RQ3

For the purposes of presentation, data extracts were removed from the table.

<p>Parent-teacher dyad – perceived differences and similarities in beliefs; comments on how they found the scoring of “ideal as seen by the other” exercise. Summary for each dyad.</p>
<p>Parent 5, Teacher 1:</p> <p>P5: was different, but became close as the advice given by T5 was proven to be effective. Now feels similar (apart from disagreement about amount of homework which she did not discuss as a difference in beliefs).</p> <p>T1: P5 would think similarly, but not follow through with the actions. One big point of difference – how much homework she does at home and how she does it. Overall, all parents are different in some ways but the teacher is there to give advice on what works regardless of beliefs.</p>
<p>Teacher 2, Parent 7</p> <p>Parent 7: Has a developed understanding of teacher position, recognises some constraints of resources. Feeling her beliefs are similar to T2’s and also to any other teacher. Similarity in beliefs (the way we bring ch7 up) probably helps to feel not judged, confident when going into school to talk to teachers. The only point of difference: teachers remembering about her daughter’s SEN.</p> <p>Teacher 2: Was hard to imagine what P7 might think, but was interested in find out. Thought P7 is quite similar to her in beliefs (namely – helps with homework and does things out of school). Many other parents would have similar beliefs.</p>

SENCo2, Parent 8

SENCo2: detailed description of what p8 might believe in: P8 wants to protect the child (too much), feel anxious (to care).

Generally, most parents want the same things for their children in school, but P8 and some other can't follow through on agreed things due to the lack of understanding, skill, not thinking things through, or just because it is difficult to take a step back.

P8: Feeling that S2 would go against anything she says, although they share similar values.

Has an idea of teachers' beliefs but starts to talk about her beliefs instead (are they more important?)

SENCo1, Parent 6

SENCo1: developed idea about parent's beliefs. Beliefs different as based on her child's needs, worries about his future, her need for control possibly coming from her personality and experiences.

Reflected on parent not wanting to talk about home. Parent wanting a "magic cure" that education can't give (SENCo1 - wanting external help?). SENCo1 not feeling that changing the school environment will help.

P6: Does not have a developed idea of teachers' beliefs. Beliefs are similar: we want the same result, on the same wave length, working well together until the point when ch6's behaviour deteriorates.

Appendix 18.2: Initial themes for RQ4

For the purposes of presentation, data extracts were removed from the table.

Codes	Views on collaboration and beliefs - summary
<p>Difference between agreeing on targets and actions</p> <p>Does not think similarity in beliefs would help?</p> <p>Beliefs – not important.</p> <p>Problem-solving – helps</p> <p>Beliefs (ideas on what to try) are similar, as they are driven by needs of the child.</p>	<p>Parent 5, Teacher 1:</p> <p><u>Teacher 1:</u> P5 holds similar beliefs but does not follow through on some of them – she is not sure why, but does not think it is linked directly to beliefs.</p> <p>Beliefs are not important for collaboration (there always will be differences with any parent) as it is built on giving effective advice.</p> <p><u>Parent 5</u></p> <p>Thinks their beliefs are similar as driven by the need of the child, trusts the teacher on giving good advice; feels her beliefs are recognized. (e.g. having a friend)</p>

<p>Beliefs (views, wishes) are important – taken into account by the teacher, listened to.</p>	
<p>? feels similar to teachers – easier to go and discuss issues if needed.</p> <p>Feels collaboration is going well. Teacher – listened (accommodating). Wants child to be independent – does not rush into school to talk about incidences.</p> <p>feels similar to teachers – easier to go and discuss issues if needed</p> <p>Listens to parent, accommodating</p> <p>Beliefs – not important as need to listen and find a way of dealing with the issue.</p>	<p>Teacher 2, Parent 7</p> <p><u>Parent 7:</u></p> <p>Similarity in beliefs (the way we bring ch7 up) probably helps to feel not judged, confident when going into school to talk to teachers.</p> <p>Wants Ch7 to be independent – will not go in to complain with any incident.</p> <p>Feels listened – accommodating teacher.</p> <p><u>Teacher 2:</u></p> <p>P7 is supportive: comes in to talk about progress and agree what she / school can do, helps with homework (?). Would always come and talk if she has any questions.</p> <p>Beliefs are not important as even when parents are different from you, you’ve got to understand their and your opinions and work out a way of helping the child, giving them more things in school when parents don’t do something at home (e.g. read).</p>
<p>Beliefs seem to be similar, but collaboration / communication – very</p>	<p>SENCo2, Parent 8</p>

<p>difficult. Parent feels her opinion is not heard</p> <p>Difficulties in collaboration – linked to anxiety and getting angry with the school</p> <p>There is a “best way” and it needs to be shared with parents so that they can learn and take a step back</p> <p>Beliefs similar (agreeing) but cannot carry out agreed actions.</p> <p>Parenting beliefs applied to parents – support them in the way she learnt to support her children</p>	<p><u>Parent 8:</u></p> <p>Beliefs seem to be similar, but collaboration / communication – very difficult. Parent feels her opinion is not heard</p> <p>SENCo2:</p> <p>Beliefs – similar, collaboration – difficult when P8 gets anxious and angry. Can’t follow through.</p> <p>Beliefs in what is “the best way” need to be shared with parents, so that they can take a step back and learn (based on her own experience of getting help with her adopted children).</p> <p>Applies her own beliefs about parenting to parents: boundaries, cares, helps, stays calm, supports independence.</p>
<p>Parent’s priority – something the education can’t give</p> <p>Beliefs similar... apart from not being given time to calm down and fair hearing. Restraints of school environment (interests of other children)</p>	<p>SENCo1, Parent 6</p> <p>SENCo1: parent wants what school can’t give</p> <p>Parent 6:</p> <p>Beliefs (end result for Ch6) are similar, but due to school restraints it’s difficult to get there. Differences in views on how Ch6 should be supported also due to school restraints.</p>

The same beliefs – wanting the same things for Ch6, but not possible to get them.

Differences in perspectives: Ch6 perspective / the rest of the children.

Beliefs – not important. Want the same end result, but can't figure a way of getting there.

Appendix 19: Initial themes in the analysis of collaboration dynamics on dyadic level

For the purposes of presentation, data extracts were removed from the table.

Parent-teacher dyad – relationships summary
<p>Parent 5, Teacher 1:</p> <p>Teacher 1 – feels as expert, who wants to share her experience and expertise. Felt that her perception of the parent was judgmental – as T5 would like to think she does these things, but she actually does not and probably lacks understanding of what’s required. Although T1 recognises that we “can’t be perfect all the time” Connects to the parent on the basis of her own parenting experiences.</p> <p>Frustrated that parent doesn’t do things at home as agreed. Not sure why though... (doesn’t have developed ideas about parent’s perspective?) Doesn’t think it’s important; Doesn’t understand; Doesn’t have sufficient knowledge/ skill; different perspective on education (linked to past educ. experiences)?</p> <p>Values are not important – there always will be differences with any parent, it is more important whether the advice works or not.</p> <p>What helps – regular communication, open door policy, relating to parents as a parent.</p> <p>P5: not sure what T1 might think, but feels similar to her.</p> <p>Feels she is less experienced, perceives teacher opinion as advice and really values it (since it works and makes life at home easier). Glad that T1 has her own parenting experience.</p> <p>Originally felt her perspective was different, but then recognized that targets set by T1 were important and changed her approach (e.g. routine etc).</p> <p>Appreciates effective advice; regular informal communication; teacher responding to her concerns.</p>

Happy to adopt teacher's perspective and thinks that their differences are not important as they go through a process of joint problem solving to sort out best for the child.

Teacher 2, Parent 7

Teacher 2:

Was hard to imagine what P7 might think, but was interested in find out.

Thought P7 is quite similar to her in beliefs (namely – helps with homework and does things out of school). Many other parents would have similar beliefs.

P7 is supportive: comes in to talk about progress and agree what she / school can do, helps with homework (?). Would always come and talk if she has any questions.

Beliefs are not important as even when parents are different from you, you've got to understand their and your opinions and work out a way of helping the child, giving them more things in school when parents don't do something at home (e.g. read).

What helps collaboration: regular communication that helps to build up relationships. Homework – as a school-home link.

Parent 7: feeling her beliefs are similar to T2's and also to any other teacher.

Similarity in beliefs (the way we bring ch7 up) probably helps to feel not judged, confident when going into school to talk to teachers.

Has developed understanding of teacher position, recognises some constraints of resources.

If there is an issue (e.g. teacher shouted and upset the child), takes a patient approach: tries to work out with the child what happened, leave it, not rush in and accuse school to complain (thus promoting independence in ch7 – very important).

She feels she can always go into school and talk about any issue (good communication), but also

SENCo2, Parent 8

SENCo2: detailed description of what p8 might believe in: P8 wants to protect the child (too much), feel anxious (to care).

Generally, most parents want the same things for their children in school, but P8 and some other can't follow through on agreed things due to the lack of understanding, skill, not thinking things through, or just because it is difficult to take a step back. Values are not important from this point of view. But SENCo2's parenting values she applies to working with parents: caring but setting strict boundaries.

Then it's good to tell parents: "that's the best way" and challenge parents, so that they can learn and take a step back – important for any parent (from personal experience of getting help with her son).

P8 is very worried about social interactions, if Ch8 tells her he's been bullied, she rushes in, angry, accusing school, but calms down when school tells their side of the story (with detailed evidence etc.); show P8 that they recognise his needs.

Important for good collaboration: face-to-face communication, open dialogue, similar expectations and ways of getting there, following things through. Sometimes it's the parent, sometimes it's the teacher who knows what works and takes on the lead.

P8: very upset with the school staff and would like better communication, following things through, respect (not to take an approach "it's my way or no way"). Feeling that S2 would go against anything she says, although they share similar values.

Has idea of teachers' beliefs but her own beliefs seems to be more salient (starts talking about them instead). Doesn't believe school in how things are done, believes her child (from not recorded conversation before the interview)

Sometimes she is OK, sometimes unhelpful.

SENCo1, Parent 6

SENCo1: developed idea about parent's beliefs. Beliefs based on her child's needs, worries about his future, her need for control possibly coming from her personality and experiences.

Reflected on parent not wanting to talk about home. Parent wanting a "magic cure" that education can't give (SENCo1 - wanting external help?). SENCo1 not feeling that changing the school environment will help.

P6: Does not have a developed idea of teachers' beliefs. Beliefs are similar: we want the same result, on the same wave length, working well together until the point when ch6's behaviour deteriorates.

Then:

- **We are still working together but situation (behaviour) does not improve.**
- **Ch6 has bad relationships with the Head, who gets involved and she has different priorities: instead of giving him the time (as P6 has asked them to), she sends him home as she needs to look after other children in school. Head repeatedly sends child home (going against what parent believes should be done).**
- **Teachers have constraints in how much time they can give him, but p6 would like them to give more.**
- **Parent does not believe the school done what promised (believing the child's side of the story) and feels he is not treated fairly.**
- **Parent gives up asking.**

Beliefs about parenting don't really have anything to do with how p6 works with school.

Appendix 20.1: An example of a transcript (focus group).

Pilot stage parent focus group.

Intro:

R: I hope to talk to you how you understand collaboration. Not the best word to use, what I mean by it is the process of working together with the school. I will talk a little bit about how you experience, then how do you know when it is working and when it is not working. After that I will process the information and combine it with what SENCOs tell me of mainstream school. I will put together a questionnaire for the next stage of my research. Does it make some sense?

Everyone: Ye...

R: Then I will talk to school staff and parents individually to see what their

P1: If you are interviewing school are these schools our children are at? Or are they random schools?

R: no, your children do not go to these schools, it is unlikely. It will be a different set of parents and schools. This is a pilot stage to prepare for the main stage. I rely on you as experts in the area. I need your experience to tell me how to structure my research. Next year October-November I will run a feedback group for parents and school and people from the LA.

P1: will there be like commissioners there?

R: who do you mean?

P1: JD

R: Big bosses? I don't know, depends on what we will find out. We will use that group to plan what are the practical applications of the research. We will see. You right it might be good to see them there...

P1: because if they are there they will cascade down the food chain.

R: yes, that's a good idea, I will talk to BW about it as well.

P2: are you schools primary / secondary?

R: I have two primaries and one secondary.

Introductions – names, age of the child and school...

Ages:

P1: Y5 Mainstream

P2: 13, special school, went for 2 year to a Unit attached to a mainstream before.

P3: 5-6, Special school + experiences of pre-school – mainstream

P4: 15, special school

Main transcript:

R: think about what collaboration looked like for you in your experience. Here is just a definition from Oxford Dictionary: collaboration is a process of working with someone to produce something. And in this case someone is the school and something is the well-being for the child. Because I think that generally speaking every parent and pretty much every member of school staff unless they are terribly stressed are all thinking about well-being for the child. So... May be just think for a second about a situation that you would describe as that. In a very wide sense of the word, a situation that you would say: that's how collaboration looked for me and I will be jotting down your ideas.

So, for example, from my experience I often come into schools where maybe the parent is there and the teachers are there and they are discussing current issues and put together an action plan as a result. And they both agree, well that's what we need to do. So that is how collaboration is in my experience of helping it happen.

P2: Ye, the most obvious one for me is the home-school diary. Because my child goes in a taxi to school, so we don't have that much chance to talk to anyone, so we rely a lot... give them messages every day about how he has been generally at home, and think it will help them to know what kind of mood he has been in. Pretty basic but essential.

R: Yes, and then they use this information to help them through the day? Do they write in the diary?..

P2: yes, they write there few things, they don't have much time, so they right a few key things about how his day has been.

P3: yes, I've got similar but it's really comprehensive (laugh) it's like three pages of the book every day. (Every day, wow!). But Ch3 I don't know whether it is different but because she is in a special school, maybe the class size is smaller

P2: our class size is 12-13 children

P3: Ok, then I don't know then

P1: yes, my son, it was a useful thing for us as well, but it's was something I had to fight quite hard to get them to do one on a regular basis and certainly I never got three pages. So it depends a lot on the teacher.

P2: no, a paragraph...

P3: while I feel quite inefficient that I can't right that much back (laughter). You know in that afterschool period from then until the next morning quite often not that much happens, so, you know

R: ye, ye,

P1: you see we do have that but I don't know maybe it is because he is in mainstream, but it is a bit hit and miss with the diary, like I can go weeks with absolutely nothing in it, and I mean we've tried several times saying "can you write in the diary", and now I find it's much easier if I just say it verbally to his TA.

P3: but you have this opportunity, because we don't (everyone:, ye, ye, we don't, we rely on the taxi)

R: OK, so lovely, home-school diary is one of the ways in which you think you collaborate... the collaboration happens between you and school.

P4: Annual reviews. I mean as it says, but if anything comes up in between of AR that needs addressing or something is not working, then I always feel I have to say, I can just go and discuss it

R: Ye, so a review of a broader picture?

P4: In my case Ch3 statement is reviewed on an annual basis to make sure she still gets what she needs. If anything needs to be amended on the statement, if she made massive steps in one area and you know the last statement does not reflect it, it is a chance to change it.

R: so it is a review of provision for Ch3 needs?

P4: opportunity really just to talk about what's going well, what is not going well, what we can change and whatever.

P2: and now there is a new system, isn't it?

P4: ye, but she has a lot of services involved in her care and they are there. So it's a good opportunity for everyone to meet in one kind of one go.

R (writing words down)

P1: And probably what you need to add in, ones are is not going well, what they need to change.

P4: we sometimes have IEP meetings. Sometimes it's done with parents. They invite you to have a meeting, you don't always have to discuss the next targets that need to be set, I don't know whether you have it.

P2: yes, and in particular they encourage you to have a meeting

P4: they kind of send you a form with tick boxes to ask whether you'd like one or not. But we don't really have those since the system changed.

P2: I have to say, we don't really have those. What I do have, you know have an open evening, that kind of staff, I hate those, and normally does not fit with my work schedule that well and I say: can I come in separately and they say: yep. And I come is separately

R: so it's just an opportunity to come

P2: ye, see how it works, really speak to the teacher, because I normally deal with TAs on a day-to-day basis.

P4: so it's like a parents evening really

P2: yes, so, I managed to avoid the parent evening and have my own bespoke meeting, but it's a very good example where the school would collaborate with me and put with my kind of...

P4: I think it can be in a special school, they can be a bit more flexible, can't they, it might not be the same in a mainstream school.

P1: Ye, well I think there are lots of people not going to parent's evening in general, so now they released a lot more parent evening dates, so if you want you can go to two! but I think an AR might count as one...

R: OK, so home-school diaries, IEP meeting, parent's evening or individual meetings with the same review structure. Is there something else in different situation that is an example of how you and school work together?...

P1: well, like I said the verbally one, because I'd say to them, or they'd say to me: mm, this happened today, they'll let me know.

R: so it's just an informal...

P1: exchange I'd say.

R: so, verbally, informal exchange (scribbling)

P4: we are also invited once a term to a craft type morning where you can go in and sit in a class and watch what's going on. I suppose it's not collaboration because you just observing but it's a good chance to see what goes on.

P2: we get invited to assemblies

P4: productions as well, but I am sure everyone gets that.

P2: assemblies are different, because they are part of normal school day, I mean they are doing it whether you are there or not.

P1: I've never been invited to an assembly

P2: maybe because my son is older, it's because in an upper school, it might be more of an upper school thing.

P3: I think many mainstream schools invite people for school dinners, I don't know whether it's something as well...

P2: ye, I get those as well (laughs), it tends to be on those days too [when she works] (laughs)

R: to come and join school dinner

P3: they have that... every so often they have like a parents morning, where you can go in and have a coffee and it's just parents can get together and have a chat if they want to about how things are working for them.

P3: we have a Family support worker which is very unique for special schools and she runs parent support groups and a sibling group and a dads group. So it's not collaboration directly in relation to the child but it's like another kind form of... and she invites parents from mainstream schools in local area with children with special needs as well. So that's kind of not just the special school. And I find that it's really, I actually, I went to one this week where she invited a speaker for the parent support group and it was actually really useful. And it was a speaker to potentially help us and she was from... she is potentially someone who can work with us and with our children. So I thought that that was very good. And they often have training as well. They had Makaton training.

R: that's brilliant, that's really brilliant, so it's interesting how even though it's not directly about your child, but in some ways it's the same process of working together because it I don't know, maybe because it makes you feel a bit more part of the process, or maybe it doesn't – I don't know, not everything was successful.

P3: it supports you

P1: you know what you just put there, but that is like pretty much everyone else goes to a special school, whereas that doesn't always happen.

P3: that's quite unique [even for a special school], I don't think in C school that happens...

P1: we don't really get... It's not, the only time we got invited to a school dinner was when my son was due to start school and we could sit and have lunch with him once. They have new, they've a new classroom in our school which is for reception and pre-school, and they said: you can come and look round for the first morning and then tomorrow you have to say good bye to your child at the door, [laughter]

P2: it's not welcoming

P1: exactly, whereas the old classroom a lot of the parents would go in and sort of settle with children because they are at Reception, but yes, it's very much you can come and look round this one time and that's it.

P2: but I don't feel welcome to come just any time to my son's school. I feel that there are times and if you can make it – good, if not – generally one of us would go and I don't feel it's, I haven't been given an impression that I am welcomed to come other times...

P4: I was...

P2: but then I haven't asked. I got an impression that that would be intruding.

P4: I always, I know that I can drive to C school now and I can say that I'd like to see C – the Headmistress – and as long as she wasn't actually teaching, I know she'd welcome me into her office and...

P2: maybe if I'd asked it would happen, I just did not want to intrude, I don't know.

P3: I think the [?] would see you and whatsoever, but if you ask to actually see your child in the classroom you would not, would you...

P2: not because it's disruptive, they have 6 kids in there and they have a set routine.

P1: It was just a bit strange, because in the old routine they were allowing parents to help children to sort their cups out, book bags and staff, and all of a sudden it was like: no, you are allowed to see around this morning and...

R: So it sound as if there is this feeling of being invited and welcomed or not being invited and not being welcomed, and you know it is part of this how you feel about collaborating with school.

P4: I've got another, much more recent example, of really good collaboration I think. As I said Ch4 transition, she will be transitioning into, you know, post 16 education and she could stay in C school but it's not going to be enough for her, and she could go somewhere else in county, except there is nowhere in county that would actually have the provision she specifically needs, she is visually impaired, and very autistic, so I've been going round looking at various places and last week I went into RNC in H. it's quite a long way to go [laughs]. And I was thinking: I don't really want to go on my own because they are going to be asking me all sorts of questions about school and this and you know. So I asked whether Ch4's specialist visual impairment TA who has trained up incidentally in this specific role since she has been working with Ch4, I asked the Head whether she can come with me and: "yep, it's absolutely fine, if she needs to stay overnight I'll pay for her hotel, I'll pay for her train fair". As it

happened we drove and we did not stay overnight, because we both needed to be back the next day, but it was just so... the Head could not have made it easy enough.

R: ye... so it's responsiveness to the very specific need and the school...

P4: Ye, because their concern is that if Ch4 will end up going to RNC and they want to make sure that Y11 which is her transition year will run as smoothly as possible and everything will be in place to facilitate her moving.

R: ye, so I put responding to a request.

P4: But really, couldn't do enough, I was very impressed.

R: it's interesting how...

P4: and then of course equally the TA could go back into school and feedback on what exactly her view on the college, which may in turn help future students if anyone else comes in with a severe visual impairment then you know it will, so it kind of goes out broader...

R: and it's interesting that there are like two dimensions: one are steps that school routinely make to collaborate with parents, like all this staff that you talked about here, all the things that school put in place, although you had to work to get that [the P1 home-school diary] but these are routine steps; and then there is what we as parents do to stimulate this process as well and like you went and asked and they were really good at responding, so these are things that you, like went and had a chat with TA every morning, or not every morning, whenever you get a chance, so these are things that we as parents do from the other side. And also it was interesting to hear how schools... they really... they differ. There is a difference between special schools and mainstream schools but generally schools differ in how welcome they make you feel and how responsive they are... Ok...

P2: I've got one, I don't know how it is to do with schools because it is a music therapist, but she works for school, and she does a termly thing. He is not receiving any at the moment, but when he does receive it, they have like a rota who is getting it when, and she invites parents from the group termly to have a chat, so 2 or 3 parents will have a chat about how their children are doing in music therapy. And she sends you a CD with video clips, and she writes a report and she shows you video clips in the meeting and talks about it.

P4: ours isn't group, it's individual, but it's the same, you are invited every term...

R: OK, it's feeding back to you...

P2: and the video staff as well because you can then really you like watched what's going on and you kind of really inside and you see how your child responding to the children, or not (laugh), you just really kind of get a flavor of school life, which I think you really miss when you are a special school parent and you are not going in every day and you kind of go quite distanced from it, well I don't know, I do...

P3: no, you do, you do. I've been invited to riding which is a similar sort of thing, observe them riding... and the routine things that they share with you like medication and lifting and handling, form came back yesterday that's just informing you what their procedures are, Ch3 has epilepsy, so you do feed them what you want them to do and certain medical, that's kind of...

R: so that's negotiation around medication

P4: I had a similar thing, when Ch4 started in secondary, her behavior was pretty grim, I am happy to say that now, and they had to restrain her quite often, and they invited me as a parent, because for me to hear that my daughter is being restrained is quite agrhhh, so they invited me in, and showed me how they would restrain her and then I can ask anything about it and then every time she needed to be restrained they'd let me know and I could ask any questions around it. So it was really and the same with medication, because Ch3 is medicated as well.

R: so these are big areas of concern because as a parent you are really...

P4: you just don't want to think that your child is going off to school, they are going to start becoming aggressive at some point and then they will have to be restrained and you will not even know about it, it's kind of important to... to know.

R: so it's like letting you know about critical things like medication or where there was some sort of incident or when they had to restrain, that's this routine is...

P3: and also their procedures they are having because of riding, and my son does not sit on the horse very safely, so they need to have one person on each side and one person to help him get on and they just like checking that you are happy that they worked out how to do that and...

P2: and also sometimes it's a useful information because you might have to lag him around or whatever yourself and not in a right way.

R: Ok, errr, well that quite an exhaustive, exhausting... exhaustive or exhausting? [parents laugh: exhaustive and exhausting!] list, we mentioned home-school diaries, IEP meetings, open evening and flexibility around with individual meetings; errr informal verbal exchange of what, how the day has been, and then these are all you directly communicating with school and discussing you know what's going well, what's less well and negotiation happening there; and then there are examples of how schools make parents feel welcomed, and open lessons and assemblies, and various things that happen in S school like parent group and sibling group, errr and then you mentioned that schools can be very responsive to specific requests that can be good opportunity for collaboration, and then how school feedback to various things, video examples particularly helpful, reports, and also around critical issues like medication or safe handling procedures. Is there something else that is on top of your head that you'd want to contribute?

P1: what, as a positive?

R: not necessarily as a positive, errr let me just think about it, because, errr, maybe, I can see that this list covers what happens, and maybe there are things that you would like to happen but do not happen, but would be opportunities for collaborating, so maybe...

P1: well, I find in my school it's a very closed school. So it's kind of like "them and us" and they don't like it when different professionals going to see him, they are like: oh, he has been taken out of the classroom two times this week, he is missing all this science, so they are all like, they seem to really not like it when different professionals go in, even though they all go in to help him.

R: Ok, right, sorry I got a little bit distracted looking for another piece of paper but I heard what you said and let me just write it down. So it's a sense, it's in a way an opposite of being a welcoming school, it's a closed school and they are protective of what they do you were saying...

P1: yes, the teacher does not like any, she does not seem to really like when different professionals go into her classroom...

P3: that's a shame because she and the other staff could learn from professionals going in...

P1: ye, I know, she just doesn't like it. And she is very closed. So some days you can talk to her and she is fine, and then other days she is very aggressive and like gives one word answers, you know.

P4: have you fed that back to her, that that's how you find her to be?

P1: No, [laughs]

P4: if that's how uncomfortable you feel about her...

P3: I suppose it's difficult to feed that back [laughs]

P1: he has been in this class for 3 years as well, so it's

R: three years?!

P1: three years with this teacher,

P3: wow

P2: it's because it's a small school? So they

P1: ye, and they've got like mixed age groups so they got 2 year groups in there, but he did not go up with the rest of them, so she kept like a class group back, which is mainly a group of year fives with the rest of year fours which are you know most of that class are children with special needs basically... boys... well, some of them don't have statements, but they all have some in some way. So ye, but she gets very... I think... the last time at the annual review, she was like "oh, nothing we can do is good enough for you" ...

P4: sounds as if she is very defensive.

P1: yes, she is very defensive! Very very defensive... and we...

P4: maybe she needs to go on a training course [laughs].

P1: And she is like "I've been teaching for 25 years"

P4: it's time to retire! [laughs]

P2: there is often an element, I've actually had a number of occasions where I heard through school, I hear from school: "I got a lot of experience of children like this and really you are just a mother and you don't really..." you know the type, and you just have to because you know your child individually and nobody else really knows your child because they all are different and you know like autism, children with autism can be very different to each other, and some teachers can, not all of them at all, but some of them can be a bit like "I've seen it all before"...

P4: they just generalize: "your child is autistic and must then fit in these boxes".

P3: I've heard a mum say, a mum of a down syndrome child, say in a nursery setting, they said, "oh, we've - when her child started - oh, we've had a child like that before", and they just assume that he is going to be the same as that other girl. I mean I definitely would not say that about special school, but what I've experienced a little bit myself and have seen other parents experience is that in mainstream the TA is who has the most contact with the

child and they don't get that much time with the teacher and then TAs don't have the training that TAs in special schools have had and they don't necessarily have the passion for special needs and they tend to make assumptions and there is kind of, not demonizing of the parent but kind of patronizing of the parent: you just a parent.

P1: yes, that's exactly it.

P3: while they should be treating this parent as an expert because they know the child and they know the unique set of conditions and characteristics of that child, because conditions, not just autism, but autism is a prime example, but most conditions are a spectrum with variations, Down syndrome is not just one, but they tend to kind of think they know it all and there is not a budget or the willingness to have lot of training. Where there should really be taking training specific to each child and this should probably really be led by the parent!

R: ye, interesting! That's what I thought when you said that parents know this particular child and the training is in a way what parents can do. OK, so that's interesting, these are all completely another side, that's what errr, you want to be in place but you often feel is not in place is when people, school staff does not have training or passion, for supporting the child, and how, what you pointed out that TAs normally are with the child, so the class teacher does not necessarily, did you mean that they don't have a good knowledge of the child as a result?

P3: I think maybe the level of contact, because once you have a child with special needs, they have their one-to-one TA and lots of it happens in [unclear] because the impression I've got because they have their one-to-one TA, they then the teacher is almost, the teacher is involved but the child spends most of the time with TA, not the teacher.

P4: definitely

P1: well, they do, they used with Ch1 they used in their words to reduce distraction, and it was ridiculous, he sat on this work station with his TA, looking out of the window, with his back to the rest of the class, and we were like: that's just ridiculous, so you are not properly integrating him into the classroom at all.

P4: when Ch4 was in primary, because Ch4 loves music and she is very autistic, right? So, and she did exhibit some difficult behaviors, which is fair enough, so what they used to do, there was a little room to the side of the classroom and there was lots of music staff in it, and of course she'd want to go in there, and the teacher would think: "oh, ye, that's nice and easy, lets just put her in there, because she'll be quiet, she'll be engaging with her music", and it all she was doing, for a child who does not have great social skills anyway, although much better now, she was really kind of separated out and it was one of the things that when she then, that was one of the thing I raised as a concern at the time, but then when she went into secondary, fortunately, because the two TAs that she particularly worked with are really really good, you know,

P3: you do get some really good ones!

P4: and she then, I mean they are fantastic, but you know, I know that if she is off for a day, if her TA is off for the day, and another TA is going to be looking after Ch4, you kind of think, Ch4 will be just allowed to get away with exactly what she wants and she'll control everything and she'll you know...

R: so, that's again, it's the level of training and experience...

P4: yep, yep, absolutely, and interest from the TA as well. I absolutely agree with you, the TAs have far more to do with the children than the teachers do...

P2: and they can walk off the street with, well, not off the street but they can walk in with very little training.

P4: I mean, my older son is a primary school teacher and constantly pulling his hair out, because all he wants to do is to teach and all he spends his time doing is planning and red tape and you know, [parents: it's ridiculous], politics in the school and this kind of thing, and he actually said to me: I'm envying my TA because I'd rather be doing her job because she is actually teaching the children, it's ridiculous, really...

P2: in special schools you get other TAs that in a way are modelling, so a new TA joins the class and they already have 4 TAs in there and they are learning all the time

P3: ye, and they work as a team

P2: in main stream schools TAs are probably quite isolated themselves and they don't get a huge amount of input from everybody else.

R: so I think what we, what we talked about here it's about school structure and resources but also attitudes towards parents and you know you know, two might be linked because schools are under pressure...

P1: well, not only parents, because you know obviously because they don't even want other professionals coming in really,

P3: one of the main things that, key factors when we were deciding whether to send our child to a mainstream or special, we went to look round the primary and at that point we had fixed in our heads that we want him mainstream because we thought: inclusion, inclusion, inclusion, and in our heads. But when we looked round, they showed us, the child with special needs was off that day, but they showed us his desk and it was a work station and it was separate and we could sort of see that if he had a melt down they would probably just take him, you know we talked about what they would do, and we could see that if he were to be in mainstream he would end up being much more segregated than he is now, and so ironically, in a special school he is much more included, and it's partly because of the level of his needs, because he could not integrate, could not do what everybody else was doing, but it's also to do with attitudes and they tend to be... and when he was in mainstream pre-school they tended to segregate them and keep them in a special little group, the SEN children, and they did not really access the curriculum. As you said, they just kept them in their comfort zone. So they knew that he would kick off if he were to do something different, so they kept doing the same thing, music again, because he loves music, the same thing, like singing, the same thing that he likes. He has been, in his previous nursery, he has been doing painting and things, whereas by the end of the year I said that he should be accessing and he should get an opportunity to do painting even if he was not wanting to and he had went and tried to prove the point and make him do painting and he had a meltdown kicking her, I was not there but she described it to me, but it's because they took an easy route all year and just kept him in his comfort zone in that little corner. They were using his statement to support a little group of children because they did not apply for the statements for all the others. And they were excluding them from things, I was the only one who did not get a mother's day card because he did not do activities with him and it was literally: keep these SEN children to one side and keep them there and it was very antiquated the approach.

R: so attitudes in specific sense towards children and parents, but also attitudes in much broader sense about inclusion, its how passionate they are and how prepared to...

P4: that's the thing, I mean all the TAs I am sure are lovely, but there are the TAs that do their job and go home, and don't think about it till the next day, whereas Ch4's TA is so proactive, she will spend time at home preparing staff for her, so that she has things she can access. So everything she accesses is as any other child, she just needs to access it in a different way. But they can just say: well, she can't see it, so she won't be able to do it, so we won't bother about it, just get her to do something else, play on the drums instead, but her TA is so determined that she will access everything in her own way just as any other child would in the school. So I think it's very much down to the attitudes of individual TAs as well...

P2: I think there is a difference between mainstream and special schools as well. Because TAs who work in special school have chosen, they want to work in SS, whereas I am not sure, some TAs in MSS will want to work with a child with SEN, but some just see it as a convenient job, I mean it's a school hours job.

P1: I mean, Ch1's one, she just a lunch time supervisor, but she is also his TA

P2: so they are not necessarily going to have that passion, whereas if you chosen to be a TA in a SS I think, you've...

P4: ye, but nevertheless, even so, some of them are very sensitive to the kids, and they are lovely, they are nice people, they look after the children very well, it's not the same as seeing a potential in the child and thinking, actually, this child is really capable, and can actually do quite a lot. Rather than assuming: this child can't see and she is really autistic, so we just shove her over there and let her be autistic in the corner for the day, because actually she will be quite happy doing that but it is not very good for her.

R: so for you as a parent who really wants to believe in this potential and really wants to give your child best opportunities, it's a real barrier, this person on another side, how to negotiate these things, if they are saying...

P4: and it's not about being a pushy parent, some of the TAs are much pushier than I am, you know because of how they are with her, I realized all these things she could do, I probably would never necessarily, because I am at home and I've got staff to do and I am not, life goes on and...

P3: the kids would often do much more for the teacher than for the parent.

P2: I think it is a lot harder for them in the mainstream I think. I mean they have huge classes, and also, I mean we are not probably not covering other children with lesser degree of special needs, I don't know about Ch1, but it seems that all our children who are in a SS have reasonably complex SEN, and it's no doubt about it. And you have some with some level of dyspraxia, or who are struggling with the reading and are dyslexic and don't have a statement, whose parents go in and say: they really do need to sit here in front of the board and the teacher is not very interested, I've heard a lot of people with this kind of experiences.

R: so it is sometimes even more difficult as the need becomes lesser because it is less black-and-white.

P3: and they can manage, they can manage without a TA and they maybe don't get the best out of them, and they just sort of get by and I think, again teachers, it surprises me how little knowledge some primary school teachers have and they don't spot things like dyspraxia...

P4: and do you know what, when my son did, I mean he only has been teaching a couple of years now and he really did get a lot of experience working with SEN children, obviously his sister is one as well, so but he worked and his wife now worked in an afterschool club in B for children with SEN, so he's got a lot of experience. And he said when they did their teacher training they did one tiny module on SEN which did not even touch the surface. And that would be the same for any teacher then going to work in SEN school.

P1: I think it's just horrendous

R: so even in a SEN school?

P4: ye, with his trainging he could then have gone and got a job in a special school, so Ch4, two years ago her teacher was a new teacher just like my son, straight out of teacher trainging, doing her first post-qualification year, haven't got the foggiest, just haven't got the foggiest, and I thought: thank god for these TAs, that are in the class, who do know, and they are teaching her how to teach SEN children. So I think in mainstream if you've got teachers that are coming in with such a tiny amount of SEN teaching themselves, learning, no wonder they haven't got a clue, it has not been taught as a proper...

P1: And also, like, because Ch1 has got a diagnosis of autism, and the school was like: where did you get this diagnosis from and all this, just because they have this vision, because there these other couple of children with the school with autism, that used to run off and all that. But Ch1 is not like that because he is passive, they think like "oh, no he is not autistic, there no way he is autistic".

P3: There is a lot of danger in little knowledge, particularly when these are people in a position of authority.

P3: I mean again, this is not my direct experience, but from talking to other parents and also being a member of a facebook forum about SEN children, you see all these people complaining about things and I just hear these things over and over again when the parents actually having to fight school because they don't believe them about their child's needs and I always think, I am so lucky actually, that he has such a level of needs, that we don't have to fight the school continuously, whereas people...

P1: I mean we've done two tribunals, we settled on the second one, but ye, it's just because, they just would not believe us and they...

P3: they don't believe the parents!

P4: And so I have to be pushy, because otherwise he won't get any help... you know they just don't do anything, and of course this causes a really horrible atmosphere, because every time I go in they wonder what I am going to say, yea...

P2: but parents have often done much more research than the schools and they are a lot more, but it's just... it gets undervalued I think

R: so, it's interesting, we've put another whole page of what's on another side of things that, of where you'd think there needs to be collaboration around there, but it's not happening and the barriers you've told about, you started from being a closed school, or defensive, not liking when people ecome and having different opinions, or seeing how they do thing, and this whole thing of knowinf better and generalizing children on the basis of their diagnosis and maybe linked to it disagreeing on what the diagnosis should be and what the nature of need is... you know thing parents are not, you know, that parent are just parents and we know better what in fact this child is like. And then whole lot of things linked to it, a lot of

things about training and experience, the lack of them, how this makes collaboration much more difficult, you can't get them to see what needs to be done, passion and interested for the job and for the child in general, errr, and then we touched on resources and structures in schools, particularly in mainstream schools, where children can get very isolated from the class teacher, isolated from other children and how that can be quite difficult to change if the level of need is significant on one hand, on another hand it is you know it is not ideal and it is linked to the general approach to inclusion and to their passion about inclusion and their lives about how this should be done.

P1: Although they do do, which is a positive, they staff like sensory circuits, Lego club, this sort of things for this sort of children in mainstream, for this sort of children that find learning socially challenging.

R: so they are somewhere there on the way. They are not quite there yet, but they are moving there. OK, well, we had a very very rich discussion already about lots of staff around collaboration, so maybe now will be a good time to move on and maybe we will be repeating a little bit [getting more paper...]. So we might be repeating what have been said already but that's alright, and now I want to focus a bit more on how you know when collaboration is going well. And again, I think some of the things will be repeating and that's fine, I will just make a list of things. But maybe how... what are the triggers that make you feel good about it? Maybe it is something that people do, maybe it's just a feeling that you get, maybe it is something in their approach... [sorting out the paper].

So, just maybe remember a, ye, remember your collaboration experiences and how do you know that ye, that's good.

P4: I know that's good because Ch4 progress and behavior and ability and how she now does not bite herself continually and bang her head on the radiator, and that kind of thing is so much less now, in fact she has not bitten herself in months, so I know it's because of this home-school collaboration.

R: interesting, how do mean these things, just explain a little bit more.

P4: I think when you consider everything that goes on in the home-school diary all these things, the information that goes on between home and school about what they are doing with her, how she is progressing, detail, such detail in her diary. The knowledge that I can ask and then I can talk to her about bit, because she so much more willing to talk now generally, because they work on her conversational skills, and language, she still does not talk like we do, but she can articulate a pretty good sentence now and she is learning about choice, so I get, I mean she is a teenager now as well, I get "but I don't want to!", "common Ch4", "But I don't want to and it's my choice!" [laughter]

And I often hear one of her TA "we are going to re-cap", so of course now everything that we do "just re-cap", [laughter], that is a real, I can see TA coming to Ch4, coming to me, but it's just her general attitude, her behavior, her progress and I do feel if I hadn't had this successful collaboration with the school and the fortune to have such dedicated staff, she still would be the child sitting in the corner to a large degree, obviously I'd do what I can, but as P2 said, children are much more willing to do it for the teachers than staff they do for their parents.

R: so did I hear you correctly, that you know that the collaboration is going well when you achieve your common goal – you make things happen.

P4: you make things happen, ye, absolutely.

P2: I a child's life they spend a significant proportion of their time at school, so if they are unhappy in school that is going to reflect on...

P4: absolutely

P2: the way they are in general, the happy they are and improving and these sort of things

P4: and I know that I sense from what TAs say to me, that they would not feel they achieved what they wanted to if they haven't had collaboration from her parents at home, that kind of things as well, it works both ways.

R: can you just tell a little bit more about that

P4: the majority of her learning is at school, but she will bring her homework, she is learning Brail now, so if I wouldn't then sit with her and practice her Braille and write in her book the bits that she struggles on, so that they can then go with her... obviously I don't have the time to do all of that reading Braille is quite time consuming particularly when you are learning it, so they rely on me to carry on doing these things after schools, weekends, so that when she goes back into school she is then ready to move to the next stage in the book, so I very much get the sense that they value the collaboration from me to them as well as I value the same sort of thing from them.

R: Ok, so caring on at home with what you agreed in school.

P4: ye, because to fit everything in her school day and because she can't see, things take a lot longer, so after swimming for example, she then gets herself dressed, well that's great but then it takes a long time, you know by the time her bra is on wrong way round, her pants are wrong way, that kind of thing, so time... whereas if the TA were to get her dressed that would be very quick, and then they could do something else, but her social skills, her personal skills are all equally important and so they don't have necessarily, don't physically have the time during the day to sit with the Braille book and do the Braille work and then read a story on top of that, so it's just an example when they need collaboration from me, because I can say: I'm not going to do that, I am too busy, and then she would be stilted in her learning.

R: Ye, ye, you have to prioritise at home.

P4: absolutely, ye

P1: What about what I've sort of said...

R: ye, just repeat it, what was it

P1: because he has quite a lot of professionals: his OT, his SLT, errr, and his STT going into school. And obviously, his OT say do this and you get the SLT say: you can practice this, and then he gets his school homework as well, just sort of said to some of the professionals: can you get school do it in school time, because I physically haven't got the time and also I don't see why he can't be like all other children and play out with some other children, you know he needs that time.

P4: he needs to be doing normal developmental things as well

P3: he should be doing it through the school curriculum, I thought the specialists should advise the school and help them...

P1: I know, but because they are quite anti them you see,

P3: but it's really unprofessional

P1: I know... Because it's like Ch4 said yesterday, the STT went in and he did not understand factors, this factors in maths, and I said to her: just tell the teacher that, and his TA said: oh, don't tell her that! And you just, I mean, it's a real like this

P4: a real conflict

P1: ye, and I said: did you tell her? And he said: ye, was it good? Tell her every time you don't understand when she goes in, because that's what she is there for, to be able to break it down easy for you.

P3: you also need as well as collaboration between parents and home in the meetings you need that collaboration between professionals [ye, absolutely], because otherwise the school can't learn, they should be implementing it within the curriculum.

P4: it's madness, it's supposed to be a TAC

P3: they need training, because I always understood when my child was in mainstream that he got less and less hours with a specialist who previously used to go to me and do these things at home, and when he started at pre-school the idea was that he would then have less hours but they will spend more hours telling the teachers and the TAs what to do and they then will implement the programmes on behalf of therapists.

P1: ye, that's what they lie to do, when they go

P3: but they are not doing it,

P1: they, they go in and I think she sets some programmes or she assesses him and she then devise these programmes that the school then are meant to do, but the first I went to tribunal they gave quite a lot of STT hours and that's the trouble with this whole thing in mainstream I find, if the child is making progress all of a sudden all of a sudden all the provision get yanked and it's just a nightmare because you think: the only reason he has made this progress is because he has gets the provision that he needs, and they pulled it away!

P4: it's an awful fact that you have to be creative sometimes on the statement to ensure they still get the provision they need, because if you write anything too positive, the powers will say, he does not need that anymore!

P1: that's what the school say, particularly after the first trial they wanted to show that they are doing a good job and then what happened – they pulled it!

R: it is, it is pretty... you were talking about the professionals, do you feel that is an important sign of collaboration between you and the school staff or is it a separate area on it's own right?

P4: I think there is two areas: you have parent and school collaboration and then there is collaboration between school staff and other professionals that come in.

R: so it could be that with school staff you are on very good relationships but the rest of the professionals, there are issues with communication between them. Ok, what are other signs for you when you get this sense: yes, that's good?

P3: I've a few I've been saving. So the first one, was when his teacher phoned me up at his lunch time just to tell me that he had eating by himself for the first time, he has eaten his whole meal, she could not wait to tell me, there was this passion, and we've both been

working on it, I've been working on his mealtimes, she's been working on them in school, there was that sense of, and she wanted to tell me, it was a really that lightbulb moment.

P2: ye, we had that when they are really pleased in his home-school book and something he has done this really well today and we are really pleased and he worked really hard, you can tell that they are proud of him as well.

R: proud and wanted to share, because they could have been proud in the staffroom, but they...

P3: the other thing is that Ch3 does not sleep that well and it kind of goes up and down, like a couple of months ago he was really waking up in the night regularly and you'd see in the book: he struggled to focus on this. So we started experimenting with melatonin and it's kind of still hit and miss, but generally it's much better and you can see and I wrote something in there: sorry, he is coming into school really tired today and we are working really hard on this, and we know that it affects his progress. And she wrote back: yes, we can really see the days when you told us he has not slept well, because we can see it, and then the days when he slept well you can see it: he is totally engaged, like his ability, like that's a real a real collaboration, because they need us to work on his sleep because it's our responsibility but that impacts on their whole day with him, his achievements, his whole school life if affected by what, and then they try to help us as well by keeping him awake and not letting him nap.

R: so identified an issue together, and you communicated about it and you shared who does what...

P3: ye, and it's not an academic issue, but with children with SEN, they can't, we need to, when they do make mistakes is when they ignore the whole picture, they ignore the sense that he's got to sleep and they need to have this whole thing because it's so important.

R: Ok, so looking at the whole picture...

P3: because with child with SEN, it's a daily challenge just to get them fed and get them to sleep and get all the things that you take for granted with other children.

R: ye, sleep, food and then communicating and that sharing responsibilities, that you do that at home and we will do this at school.

P3: and last year I felt I was not getting any help with his chewing, he'd be chewing everything, chewing holes in his clothes and we tried giving him, he was not interested in any of the commercial products, so he'd be chewing his clothes and his fingers and he'd have wet patches between his, and I kept telling them, and we'd send with him muslins to school and my mum made this elaborate neck thing for him to chew on and for a long time they ignored it and then suddenly one day they send him home with something called a chew buddy which is a big kind of chew thing and he really succeeded with it and now uses it all the time he is a really aggressive chews and needs to chew all the time and even now if he does not have it, he goes for his clothes and his fingers. But for them to ignore that really did not help, because that affects his learning because of the sensory release, and in mainstream you are probably be in more danger of them ignoring sensory things because they don't know about it.

R: so, it's looking at the whole picture but also listening to what you as a parent think is important?

P3: yes, but non-academic challenges which actually have a really massive effect.

P1: I think it's even more harder in mainstream because they just don't know. So at the moment Ch1 has dyspraxia and he just went up a shoe size, so everything is laces, we are trying to concur that one at the moment and I am trying to get him do the loop because it's just you know even just this sort of thing, but you know the school does not see that...

P3: because it is not in the national curriculum! [laughter]

P3: but even a special school won't and then they suddenly did and now they suddenly see...

R: it's as if they focus too narrowly and then they suddenly see. Ok, all right, signs of collaboration going well, it is when things are happening what you are both are working for, things are happening, you know, child is making progress, it's when at home you feel you carry on doing things that are important and have been agreed to be important in school, you priorities you know putting your work in. It's when you feel passion from school staff and how they feel proud and they want to share it with you, they want you to be happy about it as well, they think about you. And it's when the school is opened to looking at wider picture, when they are happy to work on non-academic stuff and they communicate about it and they share responsibility for improving these things.

P4: I think positive staff as well, so for for example Ch4 came home with award and they Brailled it for her, so she can read it to me you know, she has done something well this week, she got a star that week, but you know it's a positive collaboration she feels involved in as well. She can see the effect of her positive behavior because she can come home and show it to me as well and read it to me herself.

R: so it's involving the child into this collaboration.

P4: ye, ye, absolutely.

R: OK, you wanted to say something?

P2: I just wanted to say, when teachers say something and you feel: ye, ye, your really got Ch2, that's just what he is like. Like, when "you know, he is always like that, or he always thinks that" and I feel you really wouldn't do it unless, and I think: ye, you really proved to me that you really know him.

R: so it's when they do something very specific that you think "Yes"

P2: that they actually have spent enough time with him and took enough trouble to listen to him and to think about what he is saying, it shows that you actually know him rather than just kind of...

P3: ye, I would definitely agree with that, and especially because my son is actually non-verbal, but they know the characteristics and they know what he is trying to tell them, and even when refuses to do something, he has his own way of doing that, you get to know his moods and, I think it is just also, maybe a silly one, but when your child comes home and you can feel the perfume in his hair and you know that someone must have been hugging him, and you know that they love him and they have been really looking after him.

R: Oooo, that's a very... I can connect to it, I have children, they don't have special needs but connect to this, someone was hugging them

P2: ye, you know they've been looked after and kind of, although it's not strictly collaboration, but they have been taking on you role, weren't they.

P4: they are parenting as well, they are not just teaching, they are nurturing.

R: that's a very interesting point, OK, err,

P2: I mean on the flipside is when they say something like, Ch2 is just so dyspraxic, he is 13, but he still can't put his shoes on or wash his hands, and then they'll say something like: how about a little exercise when he pins things on the washing line, or something? And you just think "how can you possibly think that Ch2 can even begin to do something like that???" And then you just sort of, and the you just. It's only maybe one thing that they have said but it actually shows that they haven't..."

P1: they've been doing sawing with Ch4 in school and they said: can you practice doing some sawing with him? And I asked: what size needle are you using? And I think they were just using a tiny one, because I remember going to my daughter's class and she was just in year one and they were using these tiny little needles, with tiny little holes and I thought I hope they are not doing that and that they are using a bigger needle. And then I: "oh, ye, why don't you use big plastic ones? That you get in pre-school with a big eye, because there is no way..."

R: so it's the ability to you know, their knowledge of your child specifically and that they know what he can and can't do and they give him the...

P1: well, ye, just differentiate, pitch it at the right level, which I am not sure they always do, even though they are meant to,.

P4: because if you pitch it at the right level, then there are more options that the child will then go on and cussed, while if you pitch it too high and they can't do it, then they are not going to want to do it at all, they are not going to....

P2: ye, ye, they say you have to be ambitious for your child and they will push them to go a bit further than you think they can go, but sometimes they just make a leap too far [laughter].

P4: you have to be realistic with it as well

R: so when you feel the differentiation... when you feel that, ye, not curriculum but learning is differentiated.

P3: something that I thought was a sign of differentiation going well, was my son quite often refuses to engage with things, and often think it's something related to social, not social, performance anxiety, that he refuses to do things because he does not really know what expected of him and he is afraid of failing, and something they worked out was that he is better off in groups, where he could focus on what other people are doing and he could copy them, and he freaked out when he got in one-to-one session. I mean he is still doing some one-to-one sessions, but to acknowledge that and I think I told them that he won't do anything at home he won't do any activities at home at all for us, and the fact that when he has got a peer group and he is being model what to expect, because obviously with autism, it is a lot about knowing what to expect, about predictability, and the fact that they kind of listened to that, and looked at him and then worked out how to get him engaged, was really helpful.

R: so being creative and adapting,

P3: ye, and coming back to knowing the child and understanding the child and understanding their psychology, really what motivates him.

P2: and looking for ways of working with, like a, like a my son's teacher a few years ago, she wanted him to practice his hand up, but actually for him putting his hand up is actually quite a big thing for him, because he really finds it hard. So she started like finding a way that he can hold a flag or something, that was much easier for him to pick up something when he wanted to, but then he fiddled with that, so she was all the time like, kind of looking for solution and communicate it to you. And then I could actually say: ye, my idea would be that you could try this and they would be like, ok, we'll give it a go.

R: so it's understanding the child and adapting to motivate them and engage them. OK, errr, the time is ticking on and I wonder whether we need to move on, to flip it to the other side again. And see what what would be the signs of collaboration not going well, and then maybe if we have the time, and as we will be writing the other one, maybe you will have more ideas to add to this one, I will put it on the floor.

So how do you know and some of the things might be just direct opposites of things that we talked about but sometimes when you think about an opposite it is not actually an opposite but something different all together. So, how do you know how do you feel it when collaboration is not happening, you know that no, that's not working, that's not right?

P4: When Ch4 was in primary, she had a particular TA who was very very good, however, this TA then had to work with another child, so Ch4 was signed to another TA and so on. And had conversation with her original TA who highlighted that she was concerned that Ch4 was being put into the side room and just left to get on with it. So, I was quite upset obviously about that, but was even more upset about the fact that if she wouldn't have told me this, I would not have known, and Ch4 would have carried on going into this room on her own and as it was I managed to, without disclosing where I got the information from, I was able to highlight this to primary head and then have a long discussion about that. And of course, she was completely unaware of this as well, so then the collaboration turned round and was positive, but the collaboration was not positive because I was completely in the dark believing that Ch4 was fully integrating in the class and the rest of it and of course for a period of time she absolutely was not.

R: so it's about important issues not being communicated to you.

P4: ye.

R: important decisions and changes.

P4: I mean it was a long time ago and things have changed, it's just this kind of thing can still go on with other children now.

R: ye, ye, of course. OK,

P1: All of mine was when I went to pick up from school I was slightly early and my son was left outside, and they haven't even noticed. So...

R: that is pretty extreme

P4: it's pretty worrying

P1: because at the time they had like these latched gates, I mean they lock them now, but at the time, they were just latched gates, so he could have gone out and just you know gone off, gone anywhere. And the reason I knew they were not, I tried to ring the office, there was no one manning the office, so someone from there went into the classroom, I left Ch1 with another parent, got his staff and said "Oh, I got to pick his staff up, because I just found him

outside". And the reason I knew thatr they did not know is because they were honest. So they had no idea that he was missing basically.

R: it's really, well, it's a big safety issue. And how would you, is it just, basically incompetent?

P1: she had a big class to be fair, she had like 34 in there and he only just started in KS2 at the time, and basically it does not excuse it but I just then would not let him go back to school for a couple of days, and we sent a letter of complaint to governors and everything, because I thought "we are not sending him back until we feel safe". So and then after that they were like that, we will keep him in the line, in the head of the line, and take the register before we go in, I don't know why they were not doing it anyway, but.

R: so it's not trusting the school and basic safety issues. Is that how you would?..

P1: ye, and actually he is one of few actually vulnerable children in that mainstream school, because they only have 4-5 that have statements, so you know you just think...

P4: it would not be that hard to keep an eye on those 4-5...

P1: ye, exactly, so,

R: so, do you think it's a good description: not trusting the school, or is it about them being careless, not doing their job properly?

P3: it's like a lack of awareness of him...

P1: ye, I always get an impression they always think, oh he is not that bad, and that's why it is such a struggle because he is not seen as majorly disruptive, he has a few sensory issues dyspraxia, you know, but he is not...

P3: he is invisible.

P4: ye, ye, basically.

R: child invisible, lack of awareness of his needs, ye? They probably thought he will be alright just lining up with the rest of 34 kids and just getting in, they did not expect him to wonder off.

P4: ye, ye.

P2: And I suppose because he is quiet they then don't notice his absence.

P4: ye, exactly, because she had this busy class..

P2: and the system is set up that it all depends on the child looking after himself.

R: Ok, what are other signs of collaboration not happening.

P2: well, to flip it round, I am aware that sometimes I am not helping the school that much. They have issues that they do not, that I don't think are that important, and I don't always bother too much, well maybe, because Ch2 he has to sit down to go to the toilet and sometimes he is quite big now and he is not standing up, it misses and it goes onto the floor, that's quite a big thing for them, but I am like: well, just help him to tuck it in sort of thing... but they don't want to do that because it's hands on and everything, so they want me to try and train him, but I don't really have time for that and I don't think, but they would probably say: well, sometimes parents are not helping us,

P3: we are all guilty, most parents help their child too much, which then does not help the school and we are all guilty of that.

P2: ye, if you don't get them out in the taxi by 8:15, you get their clothes on, they don't have time to get dressed themselves, this sort of thing. We deskill them in many ways.

P1: it's difficult though, because if you have a child with complex needs, the time it takes to teach them just say one life skill...

P4: well, that's like with Ch4, the possibility of her going into RSC, the thing that they've highlighted at the meeting is that her personal care is not her academic ability, it's her personal care, like wiping her bum, you know with number two, that kind of thing, because she can't see it's quite difficult

P3: it must be a nightmare...

P4: so, it's alright but they need her to be able to do all these things to go to school, and clean her teeth, because she will basically be living in a residential unit and she will be responsible for getting her own breakfast and everything! And of course in the mornings, I am busy getting ready for work and all this kinds of staff, so suddenly this week I really made an effort and I relayed the kitchen so that all her staff is there and she can, but I have to watch her do it, because otherwise, milk goes over there and sugar bowl and I mean the whole lot, so it's kind of making sure she just pinches a little tiny bit of sugar and not a handful, so it's all these kind of things, so and they all take time, so I think parents, it's all about parents being responsible and doing staff, but the school needs to understand that we have to work and we have to do other things well and with a child with special needs everything takes so long.

R: so it's about, what you were saying, us as parents not giving these issues high enough priority but also school not recognising what is for you realistic to do and what isn't

P4: Ye, ye, absolutely

P1: and also them not understanding actually how much pressure and stress we have to cope with at home.

P4: and because the other thing is, with Ch4 for example, school she is pushed she is encouraged, iust great all these things, when she gets home she might be a bit grumpy and does not want to cooperate with me and do her reading. And there is that kind of thing. And then there is an expectation, where collaboration does not work that well, there is this expectation that the parents should be able to go to all these coffee mornings, and the swimming gala and the horse riding and this and that, you know and I do try to go to as many as I can, but the fact is that there is my work. Then I feel really guilty that I can't go to the swimming gala,

P2: it's like having a child in Reception for the whole of their school career, isn't it? Like, my 15 year old can accept that I can't be there but Ch2 it's like a 5 year old, they still want their mummy to be there because everyone else's mummy were there and why won't you there sort of...

P4: I just'd wish they write a letter about swimming gala "obviously appreciate you might have to go to work but if you can come, that'd be great". But not "there is a swimming gala, we look forward to seeing you there!" "And I am thinking but I can't go to that one, because I went to one the last week..."

P3: there is only that much time you can take, isn't there

R: it like the opportunities that they give you including you are not actually that helpful

P3: ye, ye, we live, we are in the catchment for C but because they don't have a space there that's why we go to H and it's a half an hour journey there, they invite you, different people within the school invite you to different things, and they all ask for about 10 minutes, with traffic you need to allow about 45mins to get there, so by the time

P4: you need 1.5h trip for 20 minute appointment

P3: And then like next week somebody else invites you for 10 minutes and they've got a bit better with that but it's just they don't seem to recognize that quite a few people are

P4: it's like a lack of understanding

R: lack of understanding of timescales and resources

P1: and younger siblings, younger siblings to look after, and things as well as things as well as work to do. I often can't go to staff because of younger siblings to look after.

P4: I can't say that because mine are older but I do have 4 dogs.

P3: but other life things...

P4: yes, there are other life things and as much as you want to do everything to support and help your child with SEN, but life still goes on and sometimes you are just tired.

R: OK, so we said that signs of collaboration not working well is important decisions and changes are not communicated; you feel that the child is invisible and the school is unaware of the need, when we as parents don't help the child with the issues that can be quite important for the school but also when the schools are not understanding what is realistic to do at home and also all the stress that parents are under and also that the child might not be willing to do for his parents the work and follow the same routine, it's when for inclusion backfire, inclusion parent-wise, and it is lack of understanding of time and other resources.

P1: yes, because other times our school would just say, would say a newsletter out in the beginning of the week and say that something is on on Wednesday [lots of laughter]. Come to this thing tomorrow!

P3: another, separate one, this goes back to pre-school and it's a unique set of circumstances, but we found whenever, and it's not just us, with other people and neuro-typical children as well, whenever someone complained or commented on something critical, not even complaint but commented on something, they tried to stomp out the complaint aggressively and shut it down rather than take it on board, and then they were very rigid: we are doing it this way and if you didn't want to do it this way, they almost got then super the opposite way and tried to defend it with things like lies, and on one occasion I took the complaints to the head of governors and it turned out that the head of governors was actually kids of friends with the Head so it never went any further. And I know that the children at pre-school with SEN are still being failed because of the same set up but they won't and it's partly because SENCo is not really that interested in being a SENCo, and she is not on top of the paperwork and she is not on top of everything, but I don't think they have another one and don't want to address the issue.

P4: I suppose, they close the ranks

P3: ye, they basically whitewashed it, they whitewashed it by getting me to meet with the Head of Governors, she said "oh, ye, ye, I know what you are talking about, we are going to do this" and then shut it down and I just feel like they intimidate people into not complaining. And for example, they excluded my son from the trip to the park. And I challenged them, they send him on a trip to another park on another side of the building, him and another child with SEN, and they when I, both I and another lady challenged them, they gave two separate reasons for why each of them were not going and I felt, you could tell they are just making it up on the spot and it really disrupted both of them, my son went down in bits and the other one, girl was upset, so I said why did you exclude them? And she said I did think he could walk there. And I said "well, he walk to school through that park every day! But if you want me to bring a buggy, because it was a rolling theme, if you want me to bring a buggy so that you can take him by buggy", and she said "oh, no, no, he can't go by buggy because other children might think it's babyish". Eventually they let him go on it, but I had to really complaint and it's just really discriminatory...

P1: that happened to us, Ch1 at his school, all the other children were going to a residential, you know one of these outdoor sporty things and he went to one last year and we had to pick him up that night, right because it was just a couple of nights and they didn't think he could stay overnight, and I said OK, we pick him up this time, next residential trip I want him to stay overnight. And the next year and the next trip, and they were like: Oh no, we are not happy for him to go on this residential trip, well he can but you will have to stay nearby, because it was all up in Norfolk, well I've got two other children who go to this C school, so how I am going to get these other children to school?

R: So it's, sorry for cutting in, I just have 2 minutes left, it's about again, it's when you feel they so easily make decisions that are not inclusive, is it?

P1: I don't think they know the law, because actually the parent partnership came to us and he said where is the reasonable adjustment? And they did it.

P3: ye, ye, I mean the same pre-school has recently told the friends with a child with autism, they told her, she is trying to toilet train her child and they've told her that they won't help with that basically. They told her that she has to come in in nappies and that's just... you know, they are meant to be supporting her.

R: ye, ye, so it's just ye... OK, well we have run out of time...

Appendix 20.2: An example of a transcript (interview).

Main stage, parent interview on the topic of parenting

I: So, today we will do something a bit similar but about parenting or child rearing. So, some of the views on what's it all about, bringing child up, what's important in it, what's less important and, you know, why it is all needed. Is that alright?

P5: Yeah, that's fine, yeah.

I: and last time if you remember I showed you pictures of a different school situations

P5: oh yeah, that was it...

I: and you did a bit of sorting, so we'll do quite a similar activity today again, but this time we will...what I will ask you to do is to try and remember twelve parents, and for me it doesn't matter who they are, you can use initials or, I don't know, pictures, or names, because I will not keep this papers and I don't know them. So, if you can remember twelve parents whom you...sort of, you know what sort of parents they are; and that can be your own family, like your parent, or I don't know, anyone in your family, or your friends, or...you know, even anyone, I don't know, celebrity if you know what sort of parents they are, so it doesn't matter really who these people are, as long as you can imagine what sort of parents they are.

P5: Sure. Right, OK. So, right, twelve of them?

I: Yeah. So we'll just use that as prompts, as last time.

P5: OK, yeah.

[writing names down]

I: Sometimes it's a bit difficult to remember twelve people but...

P5: Yeah, I'm sort of thinking...

I: Have a go, and if you will get stuck at some point, it doesn't matter, we can always use less than twelve.

P5: OK.

I: How many have you done so far?

P5: Eight. Will eight be enough?

I: Well, just have a little think, if you can come up with two more that will be probably better, but if not that's fine, that's fine.

P5: OK.

I: Maybe people from school whom you know?

P5: So just eight...did you say names or families?

I: So, if you, say, know a couple, you can put their names separately.

P5: Right, oh, OK. OK.

I: Yeah, that makes it easier, doesn't it.

P5: It does, yeah.

I: Sorry, I didn't tell you.

P5: It's OK.

I: And can you remember two more dads from those or? Or we can go with ten, it doesn't matter.

P5: OK, yeah, I think that's...

I: That's more or less it...that's fine, yeah, we will be fine. So, if you remember what we did last time, it really doesn't matter for me who they are.

P5: OK.

I: And as last time the...what we will do, I will ask you to pick out three names at random and have a look at them and try to think how would you say two of those parents are a bit the same, as parents, and one is different? And, yeah. would you like an example, or are you?

P5: Yeah, OK, no I think I get what you mean, yeah, the way they parent their children just generally who they are.

I: Yeah, how they parent, who they are as parents, so, you know, any way in which you would say well: I'd say that those two parents are the same and different from the third one.

P5: Right, OK. Oh they are all completely different.

I: [laughter], it can be a bit tricky.

P5: Yeah. Well, I'd say that those two...oh, no...

I: You can think aloud, it's OK. Because it doesn't have to be completely true, just something, if you think that they are a bit the same, yeah, you can explain that as well.

P5: Yeah. Well I do think they are both hands on.

I: Oh, OK.

P5: Yeah, they are more hands on than what the dad is I would say.

I: Yeah, so can you explain a little bit more about what is it to be hands on?

P5: They will sit down with them and do homework with them, while they: "sit down, there is your work, I explain what to do and dot. Go!" They will sit down, they will spend that little bit of time playing or explaining or doing rather than... he is a nice man, but he's not, he'll put it down and go 'there is your work, he explains, I'm over here if you need me' and disappear in the other side of the room.

I: Yeah yeah, so those parents they spend a bit more time doing things with?

P5: Yeah, with the children, yeah. And how would you say, what's the opposite of being hands on and spending time playing and doing things?

P5: Being on the other side, just, either give them work or just not being there, not supervising...

I: Yeah, not supervising.

P5: Yeah.

I: And not being there. OK, fantastic. So, as last time, if you can put one of those away and chose another one at random and try to think maybe slightly different way in which you would say two of them are the same and one is different.

P5: Right, OK. Hm...they're very laid back. I don't know if it's a dad thing, or a man thing, but they're very laid back, they'll 'oh well, it's a mess, oh well, we'll do it later'.

I: Aha, aha, so laid back. And what would you say is the opposite of being laid back?

P5: Not being laid back I suppose, just rushing around and doing stuff, yeah.

I: Yeah. So rushing around... is it something about being stressed or is it different? probably different...

P5: No, I think they're different, being stressed is worrying all the time I suppose, trying to hit target all the time, you've got to get there, if you don't then I suppose it will go to pot. I rush around but don't get stressed about rushing around, you know.

I: Yeah, yeah, so it's just something about being very busy and getting all the things done as opposed to just...

P5: Chilling, I suppose, yeah.

I: Yeah, 'it doesn't matter'.

P5: 'Leave them to make a mess, it's alright'

I: Yeah yeah, OK. Thank you.

P5: Patience...Oh, I think these two got more patience.

I: Aha.

P5: Yeah, definitely.

I: Patience for...for what sort of things?

P5: Generally I suppose. With the children and maybe not with the children as well, just sort something of goes off it's 'ooh', and it's got to be thrown away, or it's got to be instantly

disregarded where, the more patience there, sort of 'well, let's think, we'll just deal with it and do it in a different way maybe'.

I: Yeah.

P5: Er, spending time thinking about it, rather than just going 'Arg, it's gone', and getting stressed out about it.

I: Oh, OK, so it's yeah, like, if something doesn't happen right they think about it 'OK, let's try to find a way'?

P5: Yeah, yeah, and take the time to do it.

I: Oh, is it your phone?

P5: Yeah, it's alright, it's probably a message.

I: OK. Erm...can you give me an example of how that might look?

P5: Er...right, homework maybe, it's not neat, or it's done scruffily, or it's not done right, they'll throw it away and just throw it in a bin and start all fresh again, while the picking bits out and saying 'drop this out, we'll do this bit again, we'll do this bit again', not starting from fresh.

I: Yeah, yeah, so if you say that some parents are really patient and they will take their time sort of, you know, look at things and, what's the opposite of that? You sort of described it but if you can...

P5: It's being impatient, isn't it.

I: Yeah, so that's like, 'that's it!'.

P5: Yeah: "gone!" and throw it away or something, yeah.

I: Yeah, do you think it's some, like to do mostly with homework or does it apply to other situations as well?

P5: I think it applies to other situations as well, like tidying up, it's sort of organized into little boxes if ought to get chucked into one lump it would be still picks up and throws them in the toy box, whereas 'oh this will go in this drawer, this will go in that drawer', so just pick it up and throw it and it's done, simply to get it out of the way

I: Oh, OK, so it's something about also yeah, just like

P5: Get it done quickly I suppose.

I: Getting things done quickly, yeah [laughter]. I'll write it down as a separate one maybe or do you think, well, I don't know, well, OK, we'll leave it as the same, OK, quickly. So getting things done quickly. OK, do you want to change one that has been around for a while?

P5: These two are the same, oh, this pair also goes together really... these two are the same. Why are they the same?... so it's general time... they spend more time with their children, not just, Monday-Friday, but weekend as well, you know, it's mum's duty to do it Monday to Friday and all weekend and every day of the week. But sometimes it should be dad's turn to take over, but mum still sits there. Do you see what I mean? Rather than.... Hang on a moment... where am I going with this?

I: No, it's interesting, yeah, go on.

P5: Just...they're always there, they're never going out, just themselves, to leave dad, they'll always bring dad and child with them.

I: Yes, so it's something about involving child in everything, and being very child-centric or?

P5: Yeah, yeah, rather than... oh, I don't know...

I: No, I think I can see where you're going, it's just I wonder how you describe that, yeah.

P5: Yeah.

I: So it's always being with child...

P5: If dad wanted to go out at the weekend, to shop or to walk the dog, he'd go on his own. If mum wanted to go to the shop or walk the dog, mum would go with child, or drag the dad along with, does that make sense?

I: Yeah yea, so, is it something about not, they don't want to leave their children, or they really enjoy their time together?

P5: I think it's probably a bit of both, I'd say it's definitely a bit of both, yeah.

I: Yeah, or they think it's really good for the child to sort of...

P5: To get out doing stuff, or just sit in doing stuff but mum will always be lingering about, you know.

I: Yeah. So always being with the child, taking them out and it's something possibly about really enjoying being with the child and not liking to leave them?

P5: Yeah, yeah.

I: OK, and what, how would you describe what's opposite to that?

P5: Opposite? Er...leaving the child at home and doing what you would do, but you could do it with the child, if it's walking the dog or going to the shop, leaving them behind I suppose, or just getting on with, like, day to day chores, getting them involved would be what they would do; if he was doing day-to-day chores he'll do it on his own, peace and quiet, it's done, I think.

I: Yeah, OK, interesting, OK thank you.

P5: Yeah?

I: Yeah.

P5: My mum ha ha [thinking]. They are the same, they'd let us get away with murder ha ha. My mum and my sister they are sort of, yeah, let them get away with anything, do you know what I mean?

I: Yeah yeah.

P5: 'Oh, we'll let them have sweets, it's alright', 'oh, let them go outside with no shoes on, they'll be fine' you know, it's just very, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen, but if you want them to have sweets, let them have sweets, you know it's that kind of you know: "oh well, doesn't matter, let them get on with it, they are children, doesn't matter".

I: Yeah, they're children, doesn't matter. That's very good description. OK, and what's opposite to that?

P5: Worrying, errr... having limits.

I: Yeah.

P5: Not completely saying no, but having a limit to that "yes", or to that "no"

I: Yeah. Limit to yes or no...Fantastic, thank you.

P5: My nan, oh, these two, my nan is different, she's really strict. She's very...not so much now, because she's obviously got older but when she brought me up she was very strict, it was very her rules, 'my house, my rules', you know. And I think that's just her generation to be fair, but it was very sort of like, yeah, very strict, if you want to go and do stuff, you've got to help me out first with doing the ironing, you know, little jobs like that, or if you want privileges you got to work for them type thing.

I: Mhm, yes. So, strict, you know my house my rules, have to work for privileges...

P5: Yeah.

I: So it's sort of something about, sounds like very... errr like discipline is the key and...

P5: Yeah, very straightforward, if she didn't like something, she would tell you, and it could be anything, anything from what you're wearing to with what you're doing something.

I: Yeah.

P5: Yeah, she would say 'no'.

I: Aha aha. And what do you think is opposite of being very strict, you know, rules, work for privileges and very straightforward?

P5: err, I am trying to think of something different to what we said already... Well we said laid back already..

I: Well you can sort of repeat it if you really feel that's the opposite of being strict and...

P5: Well restricted to the rules, sort of... no...

I: No, if you feel that laid back is a good description of opposite, that's fine.

P5: Yeah? yeah...

I: Yeah? So sort of 'doesn't matter'?

P5: Yeah.

I: Yeah. If I don't like how you look...

P5: what's the matter, it's not going to hurt. [laughter]

I: Yeah, OK, fantastic. Oh, them two are the same, for the very same reasons, they let their children'd get away from murder, you know.

I: Yes.

P5: complete opposite of my nan.

I: Yes, so that's also another way sort of of describing what's opposite to strict, it's letting kids get away with anything.

P5: Yeah, it, yeah, definitely.

I: That's fine, I can just repeat that and...let kids get away... OK.

P5: My dad. My mum and [sister] are very huggy, very huggy.

I: Oh, interesting.

P5: My dad, he's very reserved, he won't hug, he'll hug when it's needed, at a wedding, at a funeral, not as a meet-n-greet, whereas mum and [sister] will have that physical contact, hugs, 'oh, how're you doing', that excitement, my dad's 'oh, you're here again, what do you want', you know, in a very nice way, and very playful way, but he is not the huggy kissy type, where mum and [sister] definitely are.

I: OK, fantastic, so, huggy and physical contact or not the huggy kissy type?

P5: Yeah.

I: OK, now, can I mix those up, so leaving those three here because we didn't have twelve of them and just try to put one of those away and chose another one, and if we start to feel that you are just repeating yourself we can always stop, but if not we can do two more.

P5: OK. Yeah L and S are the same. I know financially that's got anything to do with that...

I: Interesting, yeah, keep going.

P5: They prefer to save while L lives in the moment... they will save for their holiday, while my sister is sort of, pay for it and then worry about it later.

I: Do you think what does it mean for them as parents, in terms of how they parent their kids, do you think it has an effect or?

P5: Er, I suppose, I know when she talks to her children and she's more like 'don't forget we're saving for our holiday', so if you're teaching them they have to save rather than spend, but my sister, it's like 'yeah, OK, we'll get it and we'll sort out later, you know, we'll buy it now and sort it out another day'.

I: Yeah, so they're like, passing down their ways of dealing with money in different ways, might say well 'don't think if I save it...'

P5: I have to save, yeah. If you want something, have to save for it... work yourself up to it, whereas she's like 'let's just get it now, we're gonna get it in the end, so let's just get it now'.

I: Yeah. Do you think that it spreads into other ways of which they parent or is it just to do with finances or in other ways those two would be like planning more and, you know, you need to be structured and thinking...

P5: Yes, yes, I know my dad and S will plan a day out ahead, and my sister'll be more spontaneous and 'let's go out today and do x', where they might have to look in their diary first and go 'oh, we can't, we have something else planned', 'cause they've booked ahead of things.

I: Yeah, so they like to sort of have schedules and, yeah.

P5: Yeah, whenever they are (???), yeah.

I: And your sister is more spontaneous, I don't know how to spell it but I will have a guess. OK. Do you want to do one more?

P5: Yeah, can do, yeah.

I: OK, let's do one more and then that will be it.

P5: Yeah, [name]...Er....[thinking]... these two socialize, not just with moms, but other children, more, I would say than she does, they'll have after school play dates and things like that and meet up with mums with the children and have play dates out and about or in their own home more than she would do.

I: Yeah, OK, so if you said there are parents who socialize and set up play dates and meet with parents and kids, how would you describe, like opposite to that?

P5: Stay at home I guess, or just, staying... well not staying at home, but isolated I suppose, just them and the kids going to school, or going to the playground or something like that.

I: Yeah, so staying more isolated?

P5: Yeah, just the two of them or three however many there is.

I: OK. Well thank you very much.

P5: Your welcome.

I: How did you find that?

P5: Good yeah.

I: Yeah? Was it OK?

P5: Yeah, it was fine, yeah.

I: OK, so, what I would like you to do now, I will read back to you sort of things that you came up with and as I read if anything pops into your head, what is actually really important for you in parenting but we didn't touch on that, we can always add it to the bottom of the list.

P5: Right, yeah.

I: So you said that there are parents who are very hands on, and they spend time with kids, as opposite to not being there; parents who are very laid back as opposed to rushing around; parents who are very patient and allow time to think through things as opposed to quite impatient parents who want to get things done quickly; parents who are always with their children and taking them everywhere as opposed to parents who leave kids behind for doing various chores and things like that; parent who let kids to get away with murder as opposed to having limits, to, you know, saying yes and no, parents who have very strict rules, as opposed to being laid back, or other way in which you did it, strict rules as opposite to letting kids get away with murder, so maybe those I will join, otherwise we'll get a bit confused, sort of, probably one of the same.

P5: Yeah.

I: Do you think it's one of the same or?

P5: Yeah, it is one of the same, yeah, definitely.

I: Parents who are very huggy or not very huggy, kissy type; parents who are quite planned and that includes like planning money and planning the day ahead as opposed to spontaneous parents; and parents who socialize or stay isolated.

P5: Yeah.

I: What do you think, does it, is there anything that...

P5: Er, going out as a family I think is quite important, not just mum or just dad, all four or three, together I think is very important, definitely days out.

I: So parents who go out as a family. And what's opposite to that you would say?

P5: not doing stuff together, not going out as such, but maybe just not doing things together. I mean, don't get me wrong, we have our lazy days, but we will still get the arts and crafts out, we will still do a bit of gaming inside, we will still do little things inside.

I: Like together?

P5: Together, yeah, rather than separating each other. OK, we do have to separate sometimes at the weekend 'cause they get a bit intense, but no, I think, yeah, just spending time together, it is quite nice.

I: Yeah, OK. And anything else that you...

P5: I don't think so, no.

I: OK, that's alright. So, last time what I asked you to do, and I'll ask a similar thing this time, if you imagine an ideal parent, which doesn't exist probably, well, not many people think that they do exist, but if you imagine an ideal parent, how would you, how do you think...where do you think on all of those things this ideal parent should be, so each of those can be seen as a scale, that's one end of this scale and that's the other.

P5: Yeah.

I: Where do you think an ideal parent need to be on each of those scales?

P5: On each of those scales, OK. One being what they should be or one being...

I: Well, for example, say, so hands on parent who spends time playing with their children or parents who don't supervise and are not there, you can think well, ideal parent definitely needs to be that, or definitely that, or maybe actually a bit of both, yeah, or not sure, sort of in the middle..

P5: Yeah, yeah, alright.

[scoring...]

I: Thank you, was it alright, was it?

P5: Yeah.

I: Yeah, OK. So, my next question will be, so can I just, I need to correct the code here, but it doesn't, it really doesn't matter (changing ticks and crosses round..)

P5: Yeah, sure, oh sorry.

I: No, that's OK, I will cope with that [laughter]. So next question can be a little bit tricky to answer, but imagine that I were to ask, it was T5, isn't it, Ch5's teacher?

P5: It's Mrs M now.

I: Yeah, but it used to be T5.

P5: OK, so we're going back to, yeah.

I: Yeah, I mean it doesn't matter, but it used to be T5 and she had, actually she still teaches Ch5 for one day?

P5: Yeah, one day a week, yeah, Monday.

I: So we chose her because you used, you used to see quite a bit of her and sort of talk to her.

P5: Yes, yeah.

I: So imagine that I were to ask her, I will give her this questionnaire and say, 'well T5, where do you think an ideal parent is on each of these scales', can you try to just pretend that you know her answers, how do you think she would answer that?

P5: Oh, OK. So her looking at parents?

I: Yeah.

P5: Right, OK, so not her as an individual, it's her looking at, right OK.

I: Yeah, so 'what an ideal parent is like T5', how do you think she will score.

P5: [scoring...]

Oh, I don't know...

[phone vibrating] Sorry, it's just reminding me that I've got a text message to read that's all...

I: Yeah, that's OK.

[scoring...]

Fantastic, thank you. So in many ways, well, in some of those, you feel that she is quite similar, you think she might be quite similar with you?

P5: Yeah, yeah. I think, when we spoke, we've sort of touched grounds of the same level with certain things, I think, yeah, I'm not too sure, but yeah, I'm gonna ha ha.

I: Well, you can never know whether it's right or not, it's more about how you feel, whether you are quite close with her, on some of those you felt like you were a bit more different, like it sounds as if you...yeah... so she's

P5: she'd be more like 'don't attach your child to your hip all the time', you know, be a bit of freedom from one another I would have thought, about them being stuck by your side.

I: Yeah, yeah. OK. Do you think there will be something that she thinks it really important for parents that she would add to this list? or if you can't think of anything then...

P5: Er, no [thinking...], no , I'm just going back over our conversations, see if I can think of anything, but no, I don't think, no.

I: Yeah, and that's fine, I think you don't, I mean you... sometimes it's quite hard to tell because you probably had quite limited type of conversations.

P5: Yeah, so it's only really about Ch5, rather than anything else that goes around about, yeah.

I: Yeah, OK, fantastic. How did you find doing that bit?

P5: A little bit more trickier, because it's looking from someone else's view I suppose, I did find it a bit more trickier, but actually alright, yeah.

I: OK, well thank you very much that you had a go. OK, so... I mean, what I wonder now is sort of, thinking about...no actually, I forgot one step, sorry.

P5: Oh, it's OK.

I: Forgot some questions. Can I ask you now to pick out three of those that are most important for you, that you would think are the most important for you in parenting, and just tell me a little bit more about why they are important?

P5: Family time for me is really important.

I: Could you mark it with an asterisk or something?

P5: Yeah. Why? Because it's getting to know her, you know, we don't, she's at school all day, so don't learn anything about her at school, you sort of, the more you do it, the more you go 'oh, she has enjoyed that', or 'she didn't enjoy that', or 'she finds that tricky'. I think it's spending quality time helps, well not establish just a bond between us and obviously my husband because he's obviously at work all day, but between us all together, we sort of learn a little bit more about each other the more we spend with each other doing stuff.

I: Yeah. And what do you think it gives you, or gives Ch5 when you learn a bit more about each other?

P5: It creates confidence. If we look silly, doesn't matter if she looks a bit silly, do you know what I mean, if we're going through the park throwing leaves and she's like 'oh, wow, they look stupid doing this, so I can join them on', erm, confidence and knowing that we're here I suppose, as a family, you know, if she's confident and... she knows we're there, I suppose she can speak to us a bit more, rather than if we're not with them all the time or don't talk to her or don't spend time ', but we're a bit distinct, a bit separated I suppose.

I: Yeah, so something about being closer together?

P5: Yeah, yeah, more connected I suppose, yeah.

I: So that people can talk to each other if something's not right?

P5: Yeah, yeah, rather than feeling intimidated 'cause you haven't got that little bond with you. 'cause I remember, really my dad, I felt really awkward talking with my dad about stuff, 'cause we weren't connected, so I suppose we're trying to build that with Ch5 and her brother, I think, yeah.

I: Yeah, OK, thank you. And what other one would you pick out as being important?

P5: patient definitely. With Ch5 yeah. She bounces off negative if she knows you're being negative she says 'well, I can be negative', and I know if, if she doesn't feed of the positivity, all sort of 'waa', if you get really cross at her or agitated, which we have sometimes because she's not done what we said, then she won't do it, but the more patient you are, the more you take your time, the more she's willing to do it. So we found being patient helps a lot with that, definitely, even though she finds, when she was younger, she didn't have the patience to do her buttons up. But the more we showed her slowly to do it, and we did it slowly, then she did it slowly, she found it was easier to do...

I: OK, so it's like you are teaching her at the same time.

P5: Yeah, teaching the patience, as well as if we're patient with her, she'll be patient back, at least sometimes.

I: Mhm, so it sounds as if it's for you something about actually helping her to do what you ask her through being patient?

P5: Yeah, yeah, definitely. 'cause she can get very impatient, don't get me wrong, we all can get impatient and, but sometimes that turns into frustration for her, and if we bounce, if we get impatient frustrated with her, she's only going to give it back to us. So we get what we give her, so, the more patience we give her, the better result we get from her, definitely.

I: Yeah, yeah. Just to check, what time are you picking her up?

P5: Twenty past.

I: Oh, twenty past, so we have fifteen minutes, fantastic, good. Because I actually can't remember what time the school stops.

P5: Oh, OK.

I: Sometimes they stop a bit earlier.

P5: They do, yeah.

I: OK, and what do you think it gives you when you, like, don't feed off the each other's frustration and other way around, try to spread patience to her and have patience back?

P5: Results. Oh my gosh, definitely. She works harder and she definitely shows when you do, definitely.

I: Yes, and what do you think it gives her when she works hard and shows the results?

P5: Oh... I had it in my head then. Pride I suppose, 'I've done it, oh I've done it'. She gets quite excited that she's actually done it without ripping it up, or scribbling all over it, and I think sense of relief I suppose, that she can do it if she sits and takes the time she can do it, we know she can do it, but I think she just finds she gets a little bit stuck and she just gives up. And that's her patience gone, she's given up.

I: Yeah, so you really picked up on that as something you need to teach her, and it's lovely to see her getting there?

P5: Yeah. Slowly but surely, yeah, she will get at it, definitely.

I: That's fantastic, yeah, OK. And what would be the third one you would pick out?

P5: Er...

I: Sorry, I just need to take that piece of paper from you.

P5: [thinking] Oh. I don't really know... hands on for me, it's all quite similar to being patient, we will sit down, we will do the same, erm. [thinking...] being strict, but not completely, I don't know if that really applies, it's...

I: Well, you can talk about it and explain what you mean by it, yeah.

P5: Yeah, Ch5 likes to have rules and structure. If there's rules and structure are in place then we can, work with it. If there isn't, she goes a bit hay wild, erm, so if there's structure, being strict with the structure, like we've got to get dressed before we have breakfast, if we're not, she just don't know whether she's coming or going, and if we don't tell her she's got to get dressed before she has breakfast, then she'll just come downstairs and be like, not too sure, eat breakfast and then go.... quite naughty in a way. She'll mess around more if we're not... not a hole, I wouldn't say completely hundred percent strict, but being lenient at the same time, like we do with the counting, if you're not dressed by the time I count to ten, then there is gonna be a consequence, so you're gonna have your tablet taken away, or you're not gonna watch CBeebies, 'cause if we don't, then she'll doodle, if we don't give her time for some things then she'll be in her own little free world and she'll forget about time and that she needs to get dressed...

I: So she really likes structure and routine and having very clear expectations?

P5: Yeah, and rules on what to do, again we still a bit hit and miss with some rules, but if we keep implying them she will get them some day...

I: So actually for her it doesn't work too well if you allow her to get away with anything

P5: No, because that's when she gets quite naughty, 'cause we found that she started hitting her sister because she thinks it's OK, which is obviously not, but if we let her do it, her sister thinks she can do it, and then we have a house full of hitting children. So we do think being

strict with her I suppose, and it shows her, to be strict but to have fun at the same time, like we've been to Legoland, we set them rules, only three rules, it was listen, stay with us, but we'll still have fun. So once those two rules were in place, we did remind them throughout the day, 'cause if you do run off, how are we gonna find you. It's little things like that, 'cause if she does run off she will panic, and she'll go to anyone then and god knows what could've happened. But I think yeah, being kind of strict.

I: OK, so it sounds as if being strict gives you results in terms of her behaving better?

P5: Yeah, yeah, I think she hasn't got a, like summer holidays can be a bit bewildering, 'cause we don't really know what we're doing from one day to the next, but we always start off with we'll get up, we'll get dressed, we'll have breakfast, like we do every day, we always do that first, 'cause if we don't, trying to get out of the house she won't go, she will kick up a stink about her shoes, or about her coat, or about what she's wearing, if we don't put these two things in place first, like we do every day.

I: OK, fantastic. And it's a bit of a silly question, but what do you think it gives her, having this structure so that she can, you know, what happens and she does what you ask her to?

P5: I think it helps her know what's coming next. She has a routine, it's, oh, what else does it show her?

I: No, just, I wonder why is it important for you to have this routine for her?

P5: it's 'cause of behaviour, it's more behaviour thing, if she hasn't got her get up, get dressed, get breakfast...

I: It will be a nightmare.

P5: It will be. We tried it the other way around before and it's all 'but why? No. but why?', it's all 'but why'. 'Because this is the way we're doing it this morning' and then once she's got dressed you'll find she'll throw toys, she'll start hitting, she'll become all violent, she won't do anything other than what we've asked, if we say, back to the bathroom brush your teeth, she'll say 'yeah, ok', and then not do it, so we have to keep going back to 'let's go brush our teeth'. 'In a minute, I'll do it in a minute'. 'No let's go do our teeth now', we have to keep asking two or three times, rather if we ask it once after we're washed, after we're dressed, then she'll do it.

I: So it's just a question for you of having some piece and calm the family essentially, having this routine?

P5: Yeah, definitely. It keeps us structured for when she needs to go I think.

I: Yeah, OK, fantastic. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Do you think there was a time when you noticed that your point of view on some of the parenting issues might be different from T5's or?

P5: Yeah, yeah, I think so. Yeah, she'll probably be a bit more laid back, saying, 'don't need to rush around, just chill', rather than doing everything at once, I think.

I: Mhm, how did you deal with this difference?

P5: I don't think...well...I think she just said 'just take the time', it goes back again to patience, just take the time.

I: Mhm, so she sort of gave you her view like an advice a little bit?

P5: Yeah, oh yeah, she gave us loads of advice on what to do, on little things like her homework, where to do our homework, how to do our homework, the best time to do it, you know, it wasn't, 'you have to do this, you have to do that', it was 'try this', if that didn't work, 'try that', and it was, she's got loads of little pieces of different things to try and to do, if I went back and said 'that didn't work', she would give us something else to try and to do.

I: Right, OK, so how, what happened then? You were a bit different to begin with and then she gave you an advice...

P5: Mhm, and we tried it, and nine times out of ten it worked, like the cushion for example. They had a cushion in classroom, it's move-and-sit cushion, and she said 'we're gonna try it in class' and I said 'oh, she won't sit still at the dinner' I think that's where it started from, I said she won't sit down to dinner, she won't read, she's fidgeting, she's got her legs up, she said 'try it just at dinner time, or try a mat, put a mat down, so she can look at a mat before you dish up the dinner', and we done all those and it worked, you know...

I: Yeah, it was very helpful bit of advice.

P5: Yeah, definitely, the cushion made her sit still and eat her dinner, rather than fidgeting and swishing about all the time.

I: So is it right that advice that she gave you sort of helped you change how you saw parenting in some ways?

P5: Yes, definitely, yeah. It was looking outside the box, she's a teacher, she's seen it all, she's got, I think, two children of her own, so she knows what to do, while I'm still quite new with Ch5, Ch5 is seven, I've not got to this age to look after, I've done like [Ch6's sister] 'cause she's four, so getting to seven, I was like 'I don't know what to do next', and she was just suggesting, like a, even at dinnertime, she used to suggest things at dinnertime, can't remember what it was now... was it the mouthfuls of food, separate mouthfuls of food, or something, just little things like, if I were struggling at home, I'd speak to her and she would say, 'well try this, or try that', and it definitely helps.

I: Yeah, good, well that's good to know. So, do you think that with time you sort of became closer and closer in some of your views on what...?

P5: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I could see where she was hitting at, the targets that she was getting at, the way she wanted Ch5...Ch5's direction to go, which I agreed with, which she needed, yeah. She needed to sit down, she needed to have structure, she needed to do, not a massive amount of homework, but twenty minutes each day with her spellings and her reading, and little things like that. Or with a timer, she said, 'get a timer for her homework' and we did, we set it a ten minute time, and said 'once that is done, get to number ten minutes, then we're done', and little things like that.

I: Fantastic. Well, that sounds really good. And my last question is, so do you think that some of your beliefs about, you know, what's important in parenting, what parenting is all about,

do you think it has any like, role to play, in how you work with the school and with different people in school or not?

P5: I think it does, I think if I mention something, it's the same as if I mention something at home, T5 like tried it in class....

I: So school, and, well, T5 and other people at school, they listen to what's important for you?

P5: Yeah, definitely, and our views and things, yeah, definitely, I think we found Ch5 had one particular play friend, and I was worried that she didn't have a play friend and I think T5 helped them to become friends, 'cause I was worried that she didn't have one.

I: Mhm, so she listened to you and took it on board?

P5: Yeah, definitely, definitely. And now they click so well we can't separate them.

I: Oh, good. OK. And what other things do you think make, like, collaboration with school easier, or more difficult?

P5: Easier with the email, it's been a few times where I've got up in the morning, or got home, and I've forgotten something, I'll email T5.

I: So that was very helpful?

P5: Oh, really helpful, and every now and then Ms T sends Ms T an email saying 'this teacher's coming in today', or 'don't forget we've got this meeting today', that's very helpful. Not so helpful I don't really know. They've not really been not helpful. If I wanted to have a meeting, then they'll go 'ok, when should we set one up', you know, it's been very easy to do, like parent's evening, if I wanted to make another meeting afterwards, I'm sure if I asked T5 we could.

I: Oh that's great, so it sounds as if for you, just the ease with which you can talk about things and get in touch and the way in which they listen to you has been really helpful.

P5: Yeah, yeah, definitely, I'd say.

I: OK, well, thank you very much, I run out of my questions and it's about pick up time. Do you have any questions you would like to ask at this point?

P5: No, I don't think so.

I: OK, are you sure?

P5: Yeah.

Appendix 21: Personal Constructs and ratings extracted form the RGTs

		parenting					
		SENCo1		Parent 6			
construct +	construct -	score- direct	score- circular	construct +	construct -	score- direct	score- circular
language used to explain and model	language used to talk at children, express opinion kids left to find their own way, parents don't discuss it,	10	8	calm, laid back, patient	snap quickly	10	8
supporting aspirations by discussion career options	aspirations not important	10	6	let their children grow up	babying children	10	6
rules kept consistent for their children and other children	treating their own children as different with different rules applying	10	10	calm, less shouting and loosing temper	shouting all the time loudly, horribly little time, not doing much together	10	10
doting on children , children are their world having high aspirations for children but not putting them under pressure	very distant from children	6	8	spend time with kids		10	10
working parent: nurturing but having to juggle and share time	putting pressure on children to make "good impression" not working: very nurturing, giving children all their time	10	5	male role models	female role models	6	6
religious parents: there is a higher being who has control over successes / failures of her children	non-religious parents: you are in control of child's success, have to fight for it.	6	7	logical, methodical, organised	disorganised, going with the flow	10	8
				calm and patient, better at ignoring	quick to lose patience	10	9

more relaxed, can be flexible and negotiate	black-and-white parents, explode quickly when child crosses a line	10	6	strict: kids to do as they are told	flexible, lenient	10	10
partnership between mum and dad	one parent is undermined and kept at arms length	10	10				
expectations of children beign just right for the child	expectations too high / too low	10	10				
actively involved: knowing what child is up to and understanding what they are going through	parents who do not engage with their children at all	10	10				
parents feel in control of their children	not in coltrol	10	10				
	percentage of similarity, SENCo1, parenting	83.33			percentage of similarity, Parent6, parenting	87.50	

education							
SENCo1				Parent 6			

construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
children engrosed - active, deep learning	passive listening	10	6	a learning process	not a learning process	10	10
teacher: guide on the side	teacher: sage on the stage	8	4	students listening to the teacher	not listening: wandering, not looking	10	10
outdoor, inviting environment	gray and concrete, not appealing students	8	7	outside activities	indoors, in the classroom	6	6
students collaborating	working on their own	8	4	learning process	getting their energy	6	8
social time: relaxed and making choices	social time: kids withdrawn	10	6	sitting down in the classroom	letting off steam	6	8

	or trying to control						
staff having lunch with kids (showing interest, better contact, role modelling)	staff maintains distance from students	10	4	being taught: sitting down and listening primary schools: more relaxed, more play having enough time to calm down or finish a task	moving about, not listening	10	10
all the learning styles are catered for formative assessment: collaborative, with prompts, exciting	only auditory learning test: stressful, artificial, solitary, snap-shot	10	6		secondary schools: strict and no play	6	6
teachers, kids, parents learning together	one of the three "partners" is missing	9	7		not having time: cramming it all in	10	2
learning that grabs you	learning that does not grab	10	10				
learning as a discovery	specific and controlled	10	6				
student's starting point is recognised	everyone treated the same	10	10				
	percentage of similarity, SENCo1, education	66.67			percentage of similarity, Parent6, education	83.33	

Parenting							
Teacher 1				Parent 5			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
doing lots at home with kids, but relaxed	doing lots, but worrying, wanting to know what's going in school, high expectations	9	7	hands-on parents: explaining, helping, playing with kids	parents who don't supervise or not there.	10	10
does a lot at home and trying to match school curriculum	does not do things at home linked to school activities, expectations	10	5	laid back parents - e.g. doesn't matter if it's a mess	rushing around, busy (but not stressed)	6	8
high expectations about behaviour and politness	behaviour expectations low, not that important	9	8	patient parents: take time to patiently sort things out if something has not worked	impatient parents: not taking time, e.g. throwing away homework if done wrong.	10	10
parents prioritising and encouraging child to take up out of school organised activities involving children in everyday activities, making them educational home - extention of school: at home celebrating successes and supporting in difficulties	not prioritising after school activities and not encouraging the child	9	9	always being with the child: taking them out , doing chores together	leaving child behind, preferring to do things without them	6	3
	no educational activities, "stick child in front of telly"	9	8	having limits, establishing boundaries	letting kids get away with murder - "they're kids, doesn't matter"	7	4
	separating home and school: not asking about school life	10	10	strict, straight-forward, clear boundaries, have to work for your priviliges	laid back and letting kids get away with murder	9	9
Authorative: do as I told	Flexible: let's discuss it	6	7	huggy-kissy type, like physical contact	loving, but not showing it in physical affection: not huggy-kissy type	10	9

parents planning ahead how to reach desirable educational outcome (e.g. end of year targets)	parents "coasting" - not planning ahead, not pushing unless problems arise	8	4	planning day-to-day activities, planning finances with kids	spontaneous, if we want to buy something - let's buy it	9	6
giving expectations in a calm, child-centred manner	"full-on", not giving up-take time for the child to comply	8	6	socialising with other parents and kids	staying isolated	9	9
ensuring happiness, emotional security	uncaring	9	10	going out together as a family	not doing things together	9	7
ensuring child is equipped and ready for the day	not monitoring whether child is equipped and ready	9	8				
ensuring child's health: sleeping, eating	not ensuring good health, sleep and diet	9	8				
	percentage of similarity, teacher1, parenting	82.41			percentage of similarity, Parent5, parenting	86.67	

education							
Teacher 1				Parent 5			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
adult-led teaching	not a learning situation (e.g. social time etc)	9	10	interactive	just watching, non-interactive	6	4
outdoor learning	indoor learning	10	6	sat in the classroom in front of a board, less hands-on and interesting children being	out learning staff, hands-on, interesting, exciting	6	7
lots of resources to stimulate learning	only technology or whiteboard-based	10	6	separate so that they can't talk to each other	children communicating with each other	7	6

focussed, captured by learning	unfocussed, low interest level	9	10	children have to be quiet, sit in one place and watch the board, structured environment	children are loud, sit anywhere they want	9	9
free play: social skills, peer learning	structured adult-led learning	9	6	not hands-on, sat down and read a book / watch the board	children can communicate in the lesson, hands-on	6	5
being told what to do	having choices	7	10	colourful environment, exciting, on the walls: posters and pictures of children	boring environment, not much to look at or do.	8	8
informal, free activities	formal environment: on their own, testing what they've learnt	6	5	adult is there if children need him/her	no adult support	9	9
more involved: do and learn exciting, creative, tactile environment	rote learning, look and learn not inviting or creative, boring environment	9	5	can choose where to sit, loose structure	strict structure: being told where to sit, what to do	8	7
more focussed information with narrower choices	that is not meaningful and overfaces you	10	7	learning of each other	being isolated, not learning from other kids	9	7
having and expert to guide you through the information	not having an expert to do that, being left on your own	10	9	children only watching	children doing expecting children to work hard at home (homework) from young age (KS1)	6	7
accessible environment: more tactile, exciting to look at and organised	inaccessible: either too little equipment, or too much, overwhelming	10	8	no homework in KS1		9	5
one-to-one learning adult-led	large class child-led	10	10				
			5				10

peers as learning mentors:				
opportunity for over-learning social skills learning	one of learning subject learning	10	10	
very strict routine	no routine at all	10	7	
	percentage of similarity, teacher1, education	72.55		
				percentage of similarity, Parent5, education
				86.87

		parenting					
SENCo2				Parent 8			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
having two children - making compromises adopted children - therapeutic parenting: need to use specific techniques	having one child: doting on them, allowing to do what they want	8	7				
parents of grown up kids: parent as a friend	biological parents: using normal parenting strategies parent not being there for you to discuss things	9	9				
setting boundaries, being in control of parenting.	no boundaries	9	7				
laid back, not worried	very anxious, worried about decisions made	6	3				
strong boundaries	does not set boundaries, lets them get away with more parent at home always	9	7				
working full-time: parenting a balancing act	with children: either bored or enjoying it away from the family, no support	6	8				
good support network, more flexibility in work and more money	network, life more difficult, no free time, just get on with it	8	9				

there is someone to share parenting with, less lonely	single parent: difficult, never get a break	9	7
giving more freedom, can't control them (when teenagers)	always know where child is, what they are doing (more for younger age) not having any love for kids	7	2
showing love		10	10
teaching child how to cope by exposing them to different situations	over-protection	7	3
	percentage of similarity, SENCo2, parenting	79.63	

education							
SENCo2				Parent 8			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
children discovering things for themselves	teacher teaching physical exercise	6	5	teacher talking, explaining, children concentrating on the teacher in school grounds	children talking to each other on trip away	6	3
learning	difficult peer interactions (e.g. bullying)	6	7	school for older kids, dark and dull	children having fun and interested	6	5
good peer interactions in school children enjoying what they are doing	bored children	10	10	altogether talking to each other	on their own, listening to the teacher	6	6
community involved in education	only school based learning	10	10	teacher instructing you	you find out information for yourself	6	5
		9	6			6	9

nice in-school environment	dull school environment	10	10	small group: just 1-2 students, where teacher can help to understand, feel confident and happy children involved, enjoying, teacher is happy and makes children feel confident	large class where students can't see/understand/hear teacher, just sit and get bored	9	6
children learning (what education should be about)	testing (what education is about)	10	7	children being questioned and puzzled energetic children, having fun	confused children	8	6
outside education making education exciting	indoors education	6	6		passively listening	9	3
lots of resources	not exciting lack of resources	10	10	learning mode	bored recreational time	9	9
having realistic expectations of schools	Ofsted wanting all children to be making certain progress and achieving certain levels regardless of their situation	10	10	learning in pairs no school uniform: wanting children to be individuals, but also not nice if there are class differences	feeling alone and daft	7	6
children making educational progress	children making no progress	10	10	percentage of similarity, SENCo2, education	one uniform, everybody wears the same	10	3
		92.59		teachers taking on board that everyone is different and paying attention to details of different learning abilities fun, happy teachers (their facial expressions)	teachers not paying attention to details (e.g. letting the quiet child just sit and be in their cloud)	10	6
					stressed and miserable teachers	10	6

good communication between everyone in school and parents	no communication	9	9
schools with good structure and routines	no routine	10	9
respect and cooperation: listen to people's opinions and don't assume it's my way or no way	poor cooperation	10	10
	percentage of similarity, Parent8, education	75.16	

education							
Teacher 2				Parent 7			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
adult input	independence, free choice	6	5	informal, relaxed learning (free craft activity)	structured, formal environment (need to behave)	6	6
having resources to refer to	not having resources	9	8	to do with learning	lunch hour, part of the structured day	8	9
outdoor learning - exploring	sat still in the classroom	8	6	outdoor learning: relaxed, children participating	in class: have to sit and watch, take information in	7	3
engaged activities	children not enjoying, finding it boring	10	10	small group	big class	9	8
educational trips to get new experiences	not going on trips	8	7	similar age group together in class	different class and ages mixing together in free play	7	6
on-going assessment	formal test	6	9	free play: you can choose what to focus on and swap and change what they do	very formal environment: have to concentrate hard	6	6
having displays in school that help with education	nothing on the walls	8	7	brain fatigue from taking information in children enjoying lesson, focussing on creativity	outside - energised, seeing friends, fresh air, bouncing	6	7
children sat in rows - no interaction	children can interact, do group learning	7	6	no uniform: more relaxed, allowed to show creativity	not enjoying, just sitting and listening	10	10
being given the right information	researching their own information	7	5	warm, welcoming environment	keeping everybody the same austere, cold, not welcoming, like an institution	6	4
children need to be organised and have their equipment	having their kit organised by parents / school	6	7			7	6

learning to share, take turns	children grabbing things / calling out	7	7	knowing needs, helping but also pushing to try things	teachers sharp, not understanding needs	10	5
smaller classes: more adult attention, more opportunities for individual approach	large classes	10	9	teachers who like to be liked by pupils	teachers not worried about being liked	7	10
	percentage of similarity, teacher2, education	87.04			percentage of similarity, Parent7, education	82.41	
parenting							
Teacher 2				Parent 7			
construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular	construct +	construct -	score-direct	score-circular
non-teacher parents: less aware of that	teacher-parents: more aware of educational and developmental needs	7	9	"new generation fathers" spend more time with kids, know them better	"old generation" less time with kids, don't know ins and outs, stricter	10	10
parents very supportive of education: homework, reading.	parents who don't read / help with homework	10	10	more experienced parents: know how to put boundaries down	new parent: totally focussed on baby, picks him up at first cry	9	9
parents who have boundaries at home so that child knows right from wrong	parents who want to come across as putting boundaries, but at home don't have boundaries	9	8	"anything for an easy life" parent - not knowing how to set boundaries, stressed	very strict, taking privileges away (military style).	5	6
goes on visits to experience things over weekend, not just watching TV.	don't take children out, so they don't experience anything further than their village	8	8	tries to understand why children did something rather than just shout; does not like upsetting children, non-confrontational	not afraid of confrontation, strict	6	5
parents who live together: easier to communicate and agree on	single parents: more difficult to agree to have consistent	8	7	"new generation": time with children comes	"old school" mothers: housework comes before children	9	9

boundaries, rukes	boundaries between two homes			before housework				
interacting with child at home by involving them in home life (cooking, gardening)	sat in front of TV, no interaction	8	8	"new generation": hands on, more relaxed	"old school": not hands-on, not engaged with children	10	10	
being a good role-model for acting in society	bad role model (swearing etc)	9	9	relaxed	sctict	7	6	
showing interest in the child's school day, their life	not having time / interest to listen to what child has been doing	8	7	very loving and involved	distant	10	10	
washing, dressing, feeding children	not brushing hair, feeding breakfast, giving balanced lunch	10	10	experienced parent : can say "no" and respect their parents	inexperienced parent: world revolves around the baby	9	9	
if child misbehaves, supporting school (it is not school's fault)	if a child misbehaves - it is all scholl's fault	9	9	parents with dogs: can set consistent boundaries in few words, not afraid to say "no"	parents without dogs: can't do that	9	9	
				experienced parent, not afraid to set limits	new mum, still learning how to read her child and be consistent	9	9	
	percentage of similarity, teacher2, education	94.44		parents who work together as a team	going against each other, arguing in front of the child	10	10	
				parents involved with the school	panrets never turning up to the meetings	9	8	
					percentage of similarity, Parent7, education	96.58		