

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILEAN STATE-FUNDED EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION: WHAT DO EDUCATORS HAVE TO SAY?

by

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Abstract

This study utilizes a multiple-case study to investigate the knowledge, experience, and needs regarding professional development opportunities of Chilean early childhood educators. The cases of the study are the professional development of the staff employed at two centers that belong to JUNJI and Fundacion Integra foundation, the two main institutions offering state-funded early childhood education in Chile. The participants of this study included two center's directors and four early childhood educators. Data collection was undertaken using semi-structured interviews, review of documents and a reflective journal. Data were categorized and analyzed adopting an inductive approach to thematic analysis. Four broad themes were identified through the analysis: different types of professional development, perceptions about the value and effectiveness of professional development activities, professional development needs, and working conditions.

Participants of this study described their experiences in a variety of professional development activities including orientation; ongoing training in the form of workshops, talks and courses; learning communities; beginning of the year intensive training; and diplomas and degrees. In general, professional development was regarded by all participants as an essential component in their careers as early childhood educators. However not all participants shared the same perception about the effectiveness of different types of professional development activities available to them. Participants expressed several needs that in their view would maximize the potential benefits of professional development activities. Those needs encompassed greater duration and depth in orientation sessions and ongoing training activities; access to ongoing training activities for a greater number of educators; more opportunities to receive training guided by subject matter experts both inside and outside the centers; more training focused in

topics related to language development, socioemotional development, and assessment; greater economic support to pursue postgraduate studies; and improvement of the initial training of early childhood educators.

In one center the participants discussed several working conditions that affected their overall daily experiences at work. Participants indicated that lack of time, increased administrative work, and low staff-child ratio were factors that hampered their work at the center, including but also transcending professional development activities.

Preface

All the chapters in this thesis are based on original unpublished work conducted by Mariel Gomez under the supervision of Dr. Laurie Ford. The research conducted as a part of this thesis was approved by the University of British Columbia Behavioral Research Ethics Board (BREB) under certificate number H13-00585.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The number of children that spend some of their time in childcare outside the home has increased significantly over recent years. Today many children experience not only their parents as primary caregivers, but also the staff in child care play an important role in the development of children (Kragh-Müller & Isbell, 2011). The increased demand of early childhood education has been accompanied by an intensification of the debate about what constitute “good quality” education for young children (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Kagan & Cohen, 1996). The theoretical perspectives and arguments surrounding that debate constitute a broad and important topic beyond the scope of this study. However, regardless of the criteria used to define quality, there is agreement that teacher education is one of the main factors that influence the potential benefit children can obtain from early education (Epstein, 1993; Howes, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Neuman & Kamil, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2003; Sutterby, 2011; Tout, Zalsow, & Berry, 2006; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006). Therefore, it is critical that those in charge of young children’s education have the qualifications and training needed to provide students with the best possible early educational environments (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006).

Along with initial preparation, professional development is one of the main avenues by which early childhood education teachers can acquire the tools needed to educate young children (Kamil, 2011). Professional development, also often referred to as -in-service training- or -continuous education- refers to the “opportunities for staff who are already working in the sector to update or enhance their practices” (OECD, 2012, p.144). Professional development provides existing early childhood educators with knowledge, skills, and abilities that they may not have or acquired in preservice programs and that are essential to perform their jobs effectively.

Professional development also has the potential to maintain teachers' skills and knowledge updated, which is especially important in early childhood education, a field where new programs are being developed continuously and the body of research on the best practices is growing fast and steadily (OECD, 2012). In addition, professional development plays an important role for those early childhood educators serving socially vulnerable children because they encounter increasing complex social environments and often need to adopt new practices that help them to respond to the educational needs of the children they serve (Pianta, 2006).

1.2 Chilean Context for the Study

1.2.1 Characteristics of early childhood education

According to the Chilean educational law, early childhood education is defined as the educational level that serves children comprehensively from birth until school entrance. The purpose of Chilean early childhood education is “to systematically foster the comprehensive development as well as the relevant and significant learning of children in accordance with the early childhood education national curriculum” (Ministerio de Educación, 2013, p.58).

Early childhood educational establishments that are officially recognized by the government must be organized in three levels according to children's age, which in turn are divided in two levels each (see table 1.1).

Table 1.1
Levels of early childhood education according to children's age

Level	Sub-division	Age
Day-nurseries	Minor Day-Nursery	0 to 11 months
	Older Day- Nursery	1 year to 1 year, 11 months
Middle levels	Minor Middle level	2 years to 2 years, 11 months
	Older Middle level	3 years to 3 years, 11 months
	(also called play group)	

Level	Sub-division	Age
Transition Levels	Pre-kindergarten	4 years to 4 years, 11 months
	Kindergarten	5 years to 5 years, 11 months

Source: Ministry of Education, 2013.

Early childhood education in Chile is not mandatory. However Kindergarten has been a requirement to enter primary education since 2013. According to the Chilean educational law, the state must promote and guarantee free access to early childhood education to all children four years old and older. However, for those children whose families are part of the 60% socioeconomically more vulnerable, the state must provide free access to early childhood education to children of all ages (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). Institutions in charge of providing early childhood education in Chile can be categorized in two groups according to their source of funding:

1. Institutions funded by the state: within this group are municipality's schools; private schools subsidized by the State; JUNJI¹ and Fundación Integra foundation².
2. Institutions without state funding: within this group are all the private educational institutions.

State's duty to provide early childhood education is fulfilled through institutions that receive state funding. With the exception of some private educational institutions subsidized by the state, all the institutions funded by the state offer early childhood education without any

¹ Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI) is an institution owned and funded by the state that provides early childhood education in Chile.

² Fundación Integra is a private, nonprofit institution that receives funding from the state to provide early childhood education in Chile.

financial cost for parents. Over 90% of the enrolment in early childhood education occurs in institutions that receive some kind of state funding. The specific amount of enrolment in different types of institutions is shown in the table below.

Table 1.2
Enrolment according to educational level and type of institution in 2012

Institution	Day-nursery	Middle levels	Pre-kindergarten	Kindergarten	Total
JUNJI	58.622	103.252	13.123	2.202	177.199
Fundación Integra	15.744	43.243	8.772	1.107	68.866
Municipal	0	0	50.505	71.867	122.372
Subsidized Private	165	1.751	80.621	110.031	192.568
Private	401	7.121	12.956	15.432	35.910
Special Education ^a	353	53.052	40.624	24.643	118.663
Total	75.285	208.419	206.601	225.273	715.578

Source: Ministry of Education, 2013.

^a Might be municipal, subsidized private or private educational centers.

As depicted in Table 1.2, enrolment in day-nursery and middle levels is concentrated in educational establishments of JUNJI and Fundación Integra Foundation while the enrolment in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is concentrated in state-funded schools, with a bigger proportion in subsidized private schools than municipal schools.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for designing policies for early childhood education, funding the institutions that provide early childhood education funded by the state and creating the national curriculum for early childhood education. The current national curriculum for early childhood education was published in 2001 and constitutes a broad and flexible framework that includes foundations, learning objectives and orientations for working with children. The national curriculum for early childhood education is not prescriptive, its purpose

instead is to provide general guidelines to orient the more specific curriculums that institutions offering early childhood education develop and implement. For example, in 2005 the technical department of JUNJI completed the current institutional “curricular framework”, which is inspired by the national curriculum but includes its own guidelines on planning, creation of communities, time management, pedagogic evaluation, pedagogic interactions and continuous education for the staff. Similarly, in 2002 Fundación Integra foundation began to develop a “curricular project” that presents the pedagogic design particular to that institution. Some of the contents included in Fundación Integra’s curricular project are educational environment, mediation and methodology strategies, time management, planning, cultural relevance, relationship with families and community, evaluation and continuous education for the staff.

In terms of the staff in charge of early childhood education, it is estimated that there are currently about 39,000³ people working in early childhood centers at the classroom level, most of them being technicians and the minority early childhood educators (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). The difference between what are referred to as technicians in Chile and early childhood educators is the duration and depth of their training. Typically, technicians hold a 2 year certificate while educators hold a university degree of approximately 5 years. Both technicians and educators work directly with children but the educators are the professionals responsible for the classroom. Depending on the institution policies and the age of children being attended, in

³ This is an approximate number because the ministry of Education does not have information about private institutions and therefore it is not possible to have an accurate number representative of all the institutions providing early childhood education.

each classroom might be one or several technicians supporting the educator in charge of that classroom.

1.2.2 Characteristics of early childhood educators' training

Apart from its duration, there is very little information available in relation to the characteristics of the preservice preparation for early childhood educators. Until now, only one study has attempted to provide a preliminary description of the programs for initial preparation of early childhood educators (Huidobro, 2006). According to Huidobro, the degree in early childhood education is conferred by 50 institutions in Chile, the majority of them being private universities and professional institutes. After analyzing the curriculum of 13 early childhood education programs Huidobro (2006) identified 4 types of courses: general preparation courses such as Educational Anthropology, Social History and Policies in Latin America, and Education, Culture and Society; courses on educational sciences such as Developmental Psychology, Human Development and Educational Theory, and Pedagogical Basis; courses on professional training such as Language and Literature, Educational Assessment and Professional Internships; and elective courses that students can choose from other faculties at their universities. Apart from Developmental Psychology and Professional Internships that were present in most of the curriculums analyzed by Huidobro, early childhood education programs show great heterogeneity in terms of the courses included in their curriculums.

Once they are part of the workforce, early childhood educators are one of the lowest paid professionals in Chile both within and outside the education field. Ten years after graduation, their wages are 15% to 35% lower than the wages of primary and secondary teachers and are duplicated by the wages of professionals in related areas. Despite poor wages, enrolment of students in programs leading to an early childhood education degree has steadily increased over

the last decade, surpassing the country's average for other professions. However, the increase in the number of new early childhood educators has not been accompanied by an improvement in the quality of their training. The quality of teachers' training has been determined mainly by assessment of teacher knowledge and performance as well as accreditation of the study programs. According to those criteria, early childhood educators perform below other professionals. For example, according to "Prueba Inicia"⁴, over 60% of early childhood educators obtained "insufficient" results in 2012. Moreover, the "Evaluación Docente"⁵ undertaken in municipal schools reveals that early childhood educators obtain the lowest result in comparison with primary and secondary teachers. Furthermore, although legislation establishes that accreditation is mandatory, only 76% of early childhood programs are authorized (Ministerio de Educación, 2013).

Once early childhood educators complete their preservice preparation and begin to work in early childhood educational centers they can continue their education through professional development activities offered to them by the institution where they are employed. Even though the Ministry of Education is formally responsible for fostering the professional development of educators, there is no public policy yet on professional development for early childhood educators. Currently, the design of professional development is done at the level of the institutions offering early childhood education. JUNJI and Fundación Integra foundation for

⁴ "Pueba Inicia" is a test that measures pedagogic and disciplinary knowledge of recently graduated teachers who voluntary take the test.

⁵ "Evaluación Docente" is a teachers' assessment conducted once a year in the municipal schools. The main focus of this assessment is teacher's portfolio, which is considered the tool that best reflects the real performance of teachers.

example, have professionals at their central departments in charge of designing professional development activities aligned with their own institutional curriculums. Both institutions offer a variety of professional development activities to the staff at their centers such as workshops for technical training, conferences on specific pedagogical topics, courses, diplomas and degrees, and communities of learning. Some of these professional development activities are mandatory for all educators employed at centers while others are optional, depending on the educators' interests and the centers' specific needs. For instance, learning communities' meetings at JUNJI are mandatory for the entire staff, but specialized courses addressing specific topics such as "infants' attachment" might be directed to educators working with the younger children at the centers.

1.2.3 The need to pay attention to the training of early childhood educators

Since 1990, and especially after the year 2006, the Chilean government has achieved important progress in the area of children rights and childhood policies. In 2007 for example, the Integrated Child Protection System- Chile Crece Contigo- was created. This system includes a set of cross-sectorial actions that integrate children in a supportive network and enables the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to monitor their growth and development (UNICEF, 2009). More recently, in 2011, a new law that extended maternal leave for a period of six months was promulgated. In terms of early childhood education, the major efforts have been related to a sustained investment on the expansion of coverage (Centro de Estudios de Políticas y Prácticas en Educación (CEPPE) & Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación (CIAE), 2013). As a result, the rate of attendance to an early childhood educational center by children younger than 5 years old increased from 15.9% in 1990 to 44.4% in 2011 (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). Furthermore, during 2008 pre-kindergarten education was integrated into the

government's school voucher system, thereby guaranteeing it for all children (UNICEF, 2009). Lastly, since 2013 kindergarten is mandatory for all children and therefore attendance to this level must be guaranteed by the state (CEPPE & CIAE, 2013).

Governmental policies intended to increase preschool attendance has been created as an attempt to foster fairness and equality of opportunity by offsetting the differences in children's background. However, some members of the academic community have expressed concern that the government focus on coverage increase might be at the expenses of quality, in which case early childhood education can hardly serve as a driver for equality. Thus, one of the questions that have been debated over the past years by both the academic community and stakeholders refers to what are the necessary conditions to provide good quality education to an increased number of young children. The answer to this question is certainly complex because it is multidimensional and can vary greatly depending of the theoretical perspectives informing the conceptualization of quality in education. In fact, despite of its well established system of early childhood education, the country has not yet reached a consensus about what quality exactly entails in relation to the education of young children. However, there is growing awareness that the improvement of early childhood educators' training is one of the critical factors that must be attended in the process of increasing coverage for early childhood education (García-Huidobro, 2006; CEPPE & CIAE, 2013).

Insufficient education of teachers has been identified as one of the main causes of unsatisfactory early childhood education in the country (UNICEF, 2001). Furthermore, concern has been expressed regarding the gap between the training of early childhood educators and the challenges they have to face once in the workforce (García-Huidobro, 2006). The need to improve initial teacher education and professional development (not limited to early childhood)

has also been stated by the OECD Economic Survey of Chile (2012). In order to improve early childhood teachers' education, it is necessary to better understand the weaknesses and strengths of the professional preparation that is currently available. Although there are some published (García-Huidobro, 2006; Izquiero & Seguel, 1992) and unpublished (Rojas, Gorichon, Falabella, & Lee, 2008) works related to this topic, there is a need for empirical studies that can guide changes for the improvement of both, initial and continuous preparation of early childhood teachers in Chile. Recently, in support of the country's efforts to move toward teachers who are better trained and more qualified, the Ministry of Education developed standards for the preparation of early childhood professionals (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). These standards present a shared vision within the field about the necessary knowledge and skills that early childhood teachers should have once they complete their formal education (Pardo, 2012). Nonetheless, the concern about early childhood teacher's quality has so far focused mostly in their preservice preparation, whereas little or no attention has been paid to professional development.

What is missing is a better understanding of how continuous education can be employed to assist in-service early childhood teachers to provide better learning environments for young children. In order to achieve that understanding, the first step is to generate knowledge about the current state of early childhood professional development, investigating the experiences, perceptions and needs that early childhood educators already have about it. The present study intends to address this research gap.

1.3 Purpose of the Present Study

Acknowledging the need for research on professional development, the purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the current understanding of the state of early childhood

professional development in Chile. To achieve that purpose, in this study the characteristics of experiences and needs regarding professional development are explored, from the perspective of the staff employed in two centers providing state-funded early childhood education in Chile.

1.4 Definitions of Terminology

1.4.1 Early childhood educational center

An early childhood educational center is an institution that provides care and education to children between 0 and 5 years of age.

1.4.2 Early childhood educators

Early childhood educators are members of the staff in early childhood educational centers that are directly in charge of taking care of and educating children. Early childhood educators typically hold a 4 year degree conferred either by a university or by a professional institute. In this study the term “early childhood educator” is used as a synonym of “early childhood teacher”.

1.4.3 Technicians in early childhood education

Most commonly called “technicians”, they are paraprofessionals in charge of assisting early childhood educators in the classroom. Technicians usually hold a 2 year certificate conferred by a technical center, professional institute or a university.

1.4.4 Professional development

For the purpose of the present study, professional development will be understood as the continuous process in which early childhood educators strengthen their knowledge and skills as teachers after they have completed their initial education. Once they are part of the workforce, early childhood educators can update or enhance their knowledge and practices through a variety of activities such as courses, workshops, conferences and staff meetings which in this study will

be called “professional development activities”. The term “professional development” in this study will be considered as a synonymous of “continuous education”. To facilitate reading, the term “professional development” will be abbreviated as PD.

1.4.5 Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI)

JUNJI is the oldest and biggest institution that provides public early childhood education in Chile. JUNJI’s role is to guarantee care and education primarily to children between 0 and 5 years of age that are in a situation of social disadvantage. This state owned institution was created in 1970 and today serves over 175,000 children along centers located in all regions of the country (Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles, 2013).

1.4.6 Fundación Integra foundation

Fundación Integra is the second main institution providing early childhood education in Chile. Similarly to JUNJI, its role is to provide care and education to children between 0 and 5 years of age that are in a situation of social disadvantage. Fundación Integra is a private, nonprofit institution that receives funding from the state for its functioning. It was created in 1990 and today serves more than 65,000 children along the country (Fundación Integra, 2013).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Forms of Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

Professional development (PD) efforts in early childhood education have usually taken five forms: formal education; credentialing; specialized, on-the-job in-service training; coaching and communities of practice or collegial study groups (Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006). Even though formal education (the degrees that a person has attained within a formal education system) and credentialing (agency or organizational standards) are considered forms of PD (Maxwell, Field, & Clifford, 2006), the present literature review will focus on the last three forms of professional (or “staff”) development which are undertaken by practitioners once they are part of the workforce and do not lead to a degree or credential, as that literature is most directly related to the present study.

2.1.1 Specialized training

Although the term *training* is used in a variety of ways in the context of early childhood education, it is mostly understood as PD activities that take place outside the formal education system (Hawkins, Crim, Thornton, & Warren, 2010; Maxwell et al., 2006; Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009). Training provides specific skill instruction or content knowledge to be applied in the job to practitioners that often have a variety of backgrounds and educational experiences (Tout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006).

Training may include one or more activities such as conferences, professional meetings, workshops, live or web-based lectures or discussions, live or video demonstrations, visits to other child care programs, manuals, tutorials, and other strategies designed to impart knowledge and information in an attempt to impact professional practice (Maxwell et al., 2006; Sheridan et al., 2009). Usually on-the-job in-service training activities and events tend to be short in duration

(often one-shot sessions) and rely on trainers considered to be “experts” which whom participants have few opportunities for repeated contact (Sheridan et al., 2009). In addition, follow-up or feedback on observed practice is absent in most in-service training programs (Pianta, 2006). Given the aforementioned characteristics, if training is not carefully designed and implemented to meet teacher’s needs, it may be superficial and of little support to affect teacher’s practices (Hawkins et al., 2010). However, in-service training can provide an opportunity for educators’ professional advancement if it provides sustained interactions instead of brief sessions; emphasize substantive inter-related topics instead of unrelated topics; relies on internal expertise, as opposed to an external expert; expect teachers to be active learners, in contrast as passive listeners; and emphasizes the why and how of teaching, instead of focus exclusively on skill development (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). In a meta-analysis of 17 studies published between 1980 and 2005 Fukkik and Lont (2007) found that specialized training, under certain conditions, does improve the competencies of early childhood teachers, including their knowledge, attitudes and skills. All training programs however are not equal, and those lacking a clear structure or curriculum have the potential to do more harm than good (Fukkik & Lont, 2007).

Based on a meta-analysis of 112 studies on the effectiveness of staff development training practices undertaken by Bennett (1987), Joyce and Showers (2002) state that training including different components can positively impact knowledge and skill acquisition among teachers (not limited to early childhood teachers). However, the components of training or a combination of them should be selected according with the outcomes expected for teacher training. For instance, when the goal of PD is to gain knowledge, information combined with demonstrations and practice increases knowledge more considerably (effect size= 1.31) than

information-given treatments alone (effect size= 0.5). When the objective of PD is the development of new skills, adding practice to the theoretical discussion or demonstration results in effect sizes of 1.18 versus 0.5 without practice. When transfer to the classroom is the objective of PD, a radical increase (effect size= 1.42) occurs when coaching is added to an initial training experience that includes theory explanation, demonstrations and practice (effect size= 0). This is an important finding considering the scarcity of studies addressing the question of transfer of learning, despite the fact it is considered the ultimate goal of staff development (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

2.1.2 Coaching

The term “coaching” in the context of PD programs for teachers is used to refer to “an apprenticeship model of an experienced mentor who help other teachers become more effective, reflective and evaluative in their daily work with children through individualized, ongoing, and intensive PD” (Sandefur, Warren, Gamble, Holcombe, & Hicks, 2010, p.88). The practice of including coaching as part of PD programs to improve teachers’ quality appeared mainly as an attempt to fill the gap between knowledge and effective application that had not been accomplished by previous education, training, or practical experience (Sandefur et al., 2010).

Coaching can take a more *directive* approach, telling teachers how to adjust instruction, or a more *reflective* approach, where coaches use teachers’ self-reflection to enhance knowledge and improve instructional practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002). According to Sandefur et al. (2010), the coaching model described in the literature is usually the directive one because of the low educational levels and high turnover in the early childhood workforce in general. The directive approach has proven to be more appealing to novice teachers but less likely to impact the practices of veteran teachers. The reflective approach is considered a more collaborative

model in which coaches and teachers focus on instructional concerns and implement changes together (Deussen, Coskie, Robison, & Autio, 2007).

Effective coaching should occur in the context where teachers work (on-site), helping teachers to learn through modeling and demonstration. Moreover, coaches are expected to establish a highly interactive relationship with teachers, infused by trust and respect. Coaches' descriptive, not judgmental feedback appears to be a key element to enable teachers to engage in collaborative problem-solving for improving practice (Kohn & Neuman, 2009).

Although coaching as a PD practice in early childhood educational settings is relatively new, it is considered promising by several authors because it seems to be a natural bridge from the more abstract nature of theoretical training to the more concrete classroom application of new strategies (Dickison & Caswell, 2007; Neuman, 2010; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Podhajski & Nathan, 2005). Several studies have shown that coaching tends to enhance the effect of PD on teacher's practices when it is added to different modalities of specialized training as workshops, lectures or courses. For example, a study conducted by Neuman and Cunningham (2009) compared the impact of PD on teachers from 291 sites (centers and home-based care settings). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: Group 1 attended a three-credit course in early language and literacy; Group 2 participated in the course plus eight months of weekly coaching; and Group 3 was a control group. The results revealed statistically significant improvements in language and literacy practices for teachers who received coursework plus coaching compared to the other two groups. The impact on teachers' practice had a substantial effect size for both, center and home-based providers.

Another study investigated the effect of PD on early childhood educators' use of math mediated language during classrooms. Twelve teachers employed at a university child

development center were trained through two hour workshop on using math mediated language. Four of the twelve teachers received also side-by-side classroom coaching after the workshop. Results indicated a 56% increase of math mediated language following the two hour workshop, but the greatest increase (39% over the training condition) was produced during the side-by-side coaching phase of the treatment (Rudd, Lambert, Satterwhite, & Smith, 2009).

Researching coaching implementation in the context of a school reform model, Poglinco and Bach (2004) concluded that effective coaching is central as a vehicle for PD, yet it is more complex than it might appear. First, in order to provide in-class technical support, coaches need to be proficient on a variety of techniques such as instructional modeling, joint lesson planning, co-teaching, formal observation and feedback, as well as one-on-one conversations with teachers. Second, because coaches fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities, it is necessary that principals enter into a supportive relationship with coaches if the coaching model is to succeed in schools. Third, the ambiguity of the coaching role (they perform their role within a position somewhere between a teaching colleague and an administrator) can hinder coaches' effectiveness because it is not clear what kind of relationship coaches should have in relation to teachers, principals and the leadership team. Hawkins et al. (2010) suggest that coaching implementation is problematic when, for example, inexperienced teachers work with coaches who either do not know the content enough or have difficulty in delivering information. In such cases coaching could even be counter-productive. Therefore, in order to determine the efficacy of specific coaching, the capacity of the coach should be one of the areas to be explored by future research in addition to teacher experience, training content and delivery format.

2.1.3 Communities of practice

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a common professional interest

and come together to improve their practice through sharing significant learning with one another (Wenger, 1998). The term was first used by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe apprenticeship, the process by which experts pass on knowledge to novices. The concept of communities of practice overlaps with related terms used in education to indicate practices where teachers learn from one another as they engage in students' work and lesson plans (Sheridan et al., 2009). Collaborative professional inquiry (Joyce, 2004), professional learning communities, and teacher's communities (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008) are some of the terms used in educational research to describe communities of practice. During their meetings, participants in communities of practice engage in reflection, planning and mutual feedback to improve specific skills or to solve a particular problem. The resulting learning experience is often very relevant and applicable because the focus is placed on issues that emerge from teachers' authentic situations in their work (Sheridan et al., 2009). Communities of practice in early childhood education are closely related to participatory action research, which typically involves a group of educators who face a real-life problem (e.g. infant-toddler caregivers need updated information on brain development) and take action to correct it using a methodology that follows a cycle of reflection, planning, action, and observation (Baker & Peterson, 2010).

In order to study the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practices and student learning, Vescio et al. (2008) reviewed eleven studies that addressed this topic in the context of schools. The conclusion from the review was that learning communities have the potential to benefit both teachers and students. Specifically, teachers reported that they valued and benefited from professional learning communities as they became more student centered. Teaching culture was also improved because learning communities increased collaboration, teacher empowerment, a focus on student learning and continuous learning for teachers. In

addition, students' achievement was improved when teachers participated in a leaning community. However, most of the studies reviewed by Vescio et al. (2008) relied on teachers self-report, revealing the need for more empirical studies which can offer evidence indicating that the impact of learning communities is measurable beyond teacher perceptions.

In the context of early childhood education, there is some evidence that communities of practice as an approach to improve teachers' practice is becoming more widely used. For example, Helm (2007) advocates for communities of practice as a powerful tool in improving performance quality and describes the example of the Illinois Project Group, a community of practice of early childhood educators that has grown steadily since it began more than a decade ago. More recently, in Australia, an early childhood professional learning community's model is being established in an effort to address a recent major policy change aimed to improve the quality of early childhood education (Tayler, 2012). In The Netherlands, van Keulen (2010) conducted an action research project concluding that the learning process in early childhood educator's communities is often challenging and some conditions seem to be critical in order to achieve good results. van Keulen found that sustainable learning processes within childcare providing organizations are possible if enough time for reflection and sufficient team coaching is provided. Furthermore, through a year of conducting a qualitative case study Kuh (2012) found that the act of meeting does not directly translate to better teaching or stronger organizational structures. In order for communities of practice to be effective in improving teachers' practices and enriching experience for students, teachers' talk about practice during on-site PD meetings has to be manifested later into classroom practices.

2.2 The Impact of Professional Development on Early Childhood Educators and their Students

2.2.1 Overview

The objective of this section is to offer an overview of empirical studies that describe the implementation processes and results of different PD efforts in the early childhood field. Five American and one Dutch study on the impact of PD on early childhood educator's knowledge and practice are presented in Table 2.1. The first criterion to select the studies was novelty and scholarly work, that is, relatively recent studies (2005-2013) published in a peer reviewed academic journal or a known editorial on the subject. Secondly, the studies included in this section were selected over others because they provide an extensive and detailed description of the process of PD implementation, which was by no means the norm among many of the studies reviewed while consulting the literature. A third criterion was that, taken together, the studies could offer examples of diverse approaches to PD (specialized training, coaching and learning communities); diverse content addressed in PD implementation (e.g. language/literacy and math skills, socio-emotional readiness, and teacher-child interactions); and diverse ages of children served by teachers (infants, toddlers and preschoolers). Thus, the study by Campbell and Milbourne (2005) for example, was included because it is one of the few published studies that have reported the impact of systematic PD activities on teachers working with infants and toddlers. Similarly, the research by van Keulen (2010) describes one of the few published efforts to implement learning communities as a form of PD in early childhood institutions.

2.2.2 Key findings

The results of the studies summarized in Table 2.1 show divergence in terms of the impact of PD when it is delivered in the form of specialized training alone. Dickinson and

Caswell (2007) reported significant gains in teachers' practice resulting from attendance to a literacy development course, but Neuman and Cunningham (2009) did not find change resulting only from the course offered to teachers. These contrasting findings might be explained in part by the fact that Neuman and Cunningham's study was targeted to individual teachers, while in Dickinson and Caswell's study teachers and supervisors engaged in PD together, which allowed teachers to act on the advice of their supervisors when implementing changes in their practices.

The studies converge in their findings revealing that PD implementation in the form of specialized training combined with coaching yield good results for the improvement of teachers' practice. In particular, the studies conducted by Campbell and Milbourne (2005); Dickinson and Caswell (2007); and Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, and Justice (2008) suggest that coaching seems to be a critical variable for the enhancement of PD's impact.

To judge from the description and evaluation of PD implementation in the studies presented, the PD delivered seems to be more directive than reflective in nature, focusing primarily on aspects such as measurable changes in teachers' knowledge and improvement in specific skills. Although the studies that included coaching emphasized the importance of an interactive relationship between teachers and coaches, teacher's reflection of their own practices was neither explicitly mentioned, nor measured in the descriptions of PD implementation. van Keulen's (2010) is the only study that explicitly addressed teachers' reflection process as a key element not only for their PD, but also as a contribution for a shift from a culture that views teachers as "consumers of knowledge" to one that fosters learning communities where teachers can develop, transform and share knowledge. However, there are several methodological issues that are problematic in van Kerulen's study. For example, it is not clear how the data were collected and what kind of analysis was conducted in order to arrive to the results presented.

Table 2.1***Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education***

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Campbell & Milbourne (2005)	To assess the effect of a PD program on the quality of care provided for infants and toddlers.	Specialized training and coaching	160 caregivers in 96 infant-toddler rooms in 48 childcare programs.	Caregivers participated in a 3-month training course of five 3 hour group classes focused on quality infant-toddler care. Outside the time spent in classes, participants also completed a portfolio project designed to facilitate caregiver's views of infants and toddlers in terms of their strengths. In addition, a total of 123 participants received three 1-hour consultation visits.	On site observation visits were conducted prior and after the training course. The <i>Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale</i> (ITERS; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1990) was used to measure the quality of each infant-toddler room. Caregiver-child interactions were rated using the <i>Caregiver Interaction Scale</i> (Arnet, 1989).	Pre- and post training comparisons between mean total scale scores on the ITERS revealed that observable change was evident in 15 (21,4%) infant-toddler rooms in the consultation group, in comparison to 2 (7.7%) infant-toddler rooms in the no-consultation group. In addition, the consultation group showed changes on a greater number of ITERS subscale mean scores than the no-consultation group. Analysis of the <i>Caregiver Interaction Scale</i> showed that consultation did not have a significant effect on caregiver interactions with children.

Table 2.1 (continued)***Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education***

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Dickinson & Caswell (2007)	To study the impact of the Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP), an in-service intervention to help teachers improve the quality of support they provide for children's language and literacy development.	Specialized training.	70 early childhood teachers employed at Head Start programs across New England.	Teachers were assigned to an intervention or a control group. Even though they were not randomly assigned, selection bias was limited in part by the use of a wait list. The intervention group received a 45 hour course for which participants received four credits from a university in their state. The course was delivered in two 3-day intensive sessions and its goal was to help teachers to build knowledge and learn classroom strategies about literacy development.	The quality of the language and literacy environment of each classroom was rated using the <i>Early language and Literacy Observation</i> (ELLCO; Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002). Classroom environments were rated using two subscales of the <i>Assessment Profile</i> (Abbott-Shim & Sibley, 1998). Data were collected before and after the intervention.	All measures of classrooms support for language and early literacy revealed moderated to large positive effects, with the exception of writing, for which only small effect was found.

Table 2.1 (continued)***Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education***

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Neuman & Cunningham (2009)	To examine the impact of PD on teacher knowledge and quality early language and literacy practices in center and home-based care settings.	Specialized training and coaching.	295 early childhood teachers (117 centers and 114 home-based).	Teachers were randomly assigned to three groups. Group 1 received 3-credit course in early language and literacy over a 15 week period delivered in 2 hours sessions per week. Group 2 received the course plus weekly sessions of coaching. Each session was one on one, on site and lasted for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Group 3 was a control group.	To examine teachers' growth in knowledge of early language and literacy, teachers were administered a true-false assessment specially designed for the study. The quality of language and literacy practices was assessed using the <i>Early language and Literacy Observation</i> (ELLCO; Smith & Dickinson, 2002) and the <i>Child/Home Early language and Literacy Observation</i> (CHELLO; Neuman, Dwyer, & Koh, 2007). All the instruments were administered prior and after the intervention.	No significant differences between groups were found on teachers' knowledge. The course alone did not have significant effects on improvements in quality practices. However, there were statistically significant improvements in language and literacy practices for teachers who received coursework plus coaching.

Table 2.1 (continued)***Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education***

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice (2008)	To describe the effects of My Teacher Partner (MTP), a web-based system of PD on the teacher-child interactions.	Specialized training and coaching.	113 teachers in a state-funded pre-k program targeted to serve “at risk” population.	All teachers received access to web-based versions of MTP lessons in language and literacy and a web-version of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATH) Curriculum. Teachers were instructed to use these curriculum materials during the week and to submit digital videos of their implementation of instructional activities every 2 weeks to the project offices. In addition, one group was offered on-demand access to video-clip exemplars of high-quality interactions. The other group received MTP on-line consultation support and feedback every two weeks for a period of a year.	Data were gathered from multiple sources measuring classroom and teachers characteristics, teacher’s exposure to different component of MTP intervention conditions. Teachers’ interactions with children were assessed using the <i>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008)</i> .	The group of teachers who received on-line consultation showed significantly greater increases on the quality of social and instructional interactions with children than the group that only received access to a website with video clips.

Table 2.1 (continued)

Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Sandefur, Warren, Gamble, Holcombe, & Hicks (2010)	To describe the development and results of the Project REEL (Resources for early educator learning), a quasi experimental, delayed treatment PD design for the improvement of children in low-income areas.	Specialized training and coaching	220 early childhood educators working in 85 child care programs located in high-need communities across Tennessee.	Year 1: teachers and their program directors received workshops and coaching in curriculum and related assessments. Year 2: teachers and their program directors received (a) 28 hours of formal workshop (fourteen 2-hour sessions) on 10 modules addressing oral language development, phonological awareness, concept about books, concept about print, alphabetic principle, social-emotional development, comprehension and motivation, emergent writing, early mathematics, and embedding literacy into center activities; (b) 42 hours of on-site individual coaching, modeling, and support for implementation of strategies taught in workshops and (c) 32 hours of on-site supportive coaching in response to teacher needs and requests. Year 3: 10 hours of topical seminars and 12 hours of “Circle of Friends” groups, a peer support group initially maintained by Project REEL specialists.	All teachers were observed each spring and fall of the grant period (2005-2008) by REEL coaches using several different instruments specially developed for the project and the <i>Early language and Literacy Observation</i> (ELLCO; Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002). Several language and literacy measures to assess children were also used.	Teachers improved their knowledge and strategies in children’s social-emotional, language, literacy, and early mathematics development. The improvements were maintained even in the third year of the intervention, after support had been reduced.

Table 2.1 (continued)***Studies on the impact of professional development implementation in early childhood education***

Author(s)	Objective	Type of PD	Sample	Intervention	Evaluation	Key findings
Van Keulen (2010)	To improve quality in early childhood by enhancement of critical reflection at all levels in early childhood organizations.	Action research.	60 educators and 10 managers of four childcare-providing organizations.	An action research process was co-constructed with the childcare organizations in order to build sustainable learning in the professional learning community. Teams of educators and their team manager followed a training course of six sessions where they co-constructed eight learning methods that were useful for sustainable learning. Team managers received feedback while exploring and co-constructing the new learning methods with their teams. The higher management received support to develop plans for sustainable change and implementation in their organizations.	Not clearly stated. Apparently, some analysis was conducted based on the recorded exchanges of teacher's meetings.	The co-construction of the theories and methods in the training and in practice strengthen the learning process of educators and increased their willing to cooperate in collective tasks. However, educators needed intensive coaching and time in order to become familiar with the new learning methods, specially the method of critical reflection.

Furthermore, the usage of the term “coaching” is confusing; the author concluded that teachers need intensive coaching in order to engage in critical reflection but she did not explain who should deliver that coaching and in which context. The support received by the organizations to implement sustainable change was not described either, which is important information in understanding how the critical learning communities could be maintained over time.

The impact of PD on children’s learning was, by the most part, addressed implicitly through the assessment of teacher’s changes in practices and knowledge (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Sandefur et al., 2010; van Keulen, 2010); teacher-child interactions (Campbell & Milbourne, 2005; Pianta et al., 2008) and class environment (Campbell & Milbourne, 2005; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Sandefur et al., 2010). However, extrapolation of PD effects on teachers and classroom to children’s performance should be done with caution because improvements in teachers’ practice do not automatically transfer to the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 2012) and observed changes in the environment do not necessarily involve changes in children’s outcomes (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). Only the study by Sandefur et al. (2010) examined children’s performance directly as part of the evaluation process for PD implementation. Children showed significant improvements in most language and literacy measures administered, yet such improvements could not be causally linked to teacher treatment group due to sample and design characteristics (Sandefur, Warren, & Gamble 2011).

The involvement of directors and other administrators in PD activities was an aspect taken into account by the majority of the studies in Table 2.1. With the exception of Campbell and Milborne’s study, all other studies included directors, supervisors, or instructional coordinators in the implementation of PD. In some cases (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Pianta et

al., 2008) the attendance of supervisors and directors respectively was even a condition for early childhood education institutions to participate in the study.

2.3 Summary

This section described the characteristics of early childhood PD delivered in the form of specialized training, coaching and communities of practice founded in the literature. The review of research on early childhood PD implementation revealed that PD in early childhood education can make an important contribution to the improvement of teacher's knowledge and practices. Most of the studies reporting good results in terms of PD implementation used a combination of training and coaching. Mainly, the activities through which PD was delivered involved instruction in several topics relevant for early childhood education (e.g. language, literacy, early mathematics, socio-emotional development) and assistance on the development of effective pedagogic strategies, chiefly through in-class coaching. Teachers' discussion and reflection of their practices among peers was not explicitly mentioned as an element of PD implementation, with the exception of one study that used action research design. Standardized instruments to measure teachers and classrooms characteristics were the most common strategies used to estimate the impact of PD. In this regard, the review of the literature reveals a notorious absence of studies including qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to better understand the impact of PD activities in teachers' practices. Lastly, the review of the literature showed broad agreement on the importance of the inclusion of administrators for successful PD implementation in early childhood educational settings.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of the present study was to better understand the state of early childhood professional development (PD) in Chile from the perspective of the staff employed in centers funded by the state to provide free early childhood education. In order to achieve that aim this study employed a multiple case study design and semi-structured interviews as the main technique to collect the data. In this chapter, the design of the study, including its purpose, research questions, research perspective, procedures, data collection and data analysis is presented.

3.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge, experience and needs regarding PD opportunities of the staff working at two centers providing free early childhood education in Chile.

3.2 Research Questions

1. What do educators and directors know about their institution's policies regarding PD?
2. In relation to PD activities experienced by educators and directors:
 - 2.1. How do educators and directors describe the implementation of PD activities they have participated in?
 - 2.2. How do educators and directors regard the effectiveness of PD activities they have participated in?
3. What do educators and directors perceive as their PD needs?

3.3 Theoretical Framework

In order to better understand the process through which early childhood educators and directors acquire new knowledge and skills once they are part of the workforce, this study drew

on the *theory of situated learning* developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). Situated learning theory is a social theory of learning that focuses on the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs. Learning is conceived as a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. The central characteristic of this theory is held in the concept *legitimate peripheral participation* coined by Lave and Wenger (1991). Legitimate peripheral participation is an analytical perspective of learning that states that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skills requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community.

Social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998) states that the social nature of human beings is a central aspect of learning. Knowledge is viewed as competence with respect to valued enterprises and knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, involving an active engagement in the world. Accordingly, the primary focus of social theory of learning is on learning as social participation, which is understood as the process of being participants in the *practices* of communities. By becoming a member of a community, participants' identity changes. For individuals, learning is a process of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities, whereas for communities, learning is the process of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members.

Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that conventional approaches usually view learning as an internalization process. This implies that a learner *internalizes* knowledge, whether “discovered”, “transmitted” from others, or “experienced in interaction” with others. This view, argue Lave and Wenger, “establishes a sharp dichotomy between inside and outside, suggests that knowledge is largely cerebral, and takes the individual as the non problematic unit of analysis” (p. 47). In

contrast, learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world. Learning, understood as an inseparable aspect of social practice, implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities, becoming a member and full participant. From this perspective, activities, tasks, functions and understandings do not exist in isolation but are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning.

3.4 Methodology

This study employed a multiple case design. The case study method has been understood and defined in several different ways over the last two decades (Berg, 2001; Flyvbjerg, 2011). For the purpose of this study, case study was defined as “a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p.54). According to Yin (2009) the case study method is relevant when the research questions require an extensive “in-depth” description of some social phenomenon and the focus of the study is to answer “how” or “why” questions.

The two cases involved in the study were: (a) The PD of the staff employed at El Roble early childhood educational center; and (b) The PD of the staff employed at Mawida early childhood educational center. El Roble center was selected from Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI) and Mawida center was selected from Fundación Integra foundation⁶. The units of analysis⁷ in this study were the PD activities of the staff employed at each of the aforementioned centers. In each center, the selected participants hold the positions of center’s

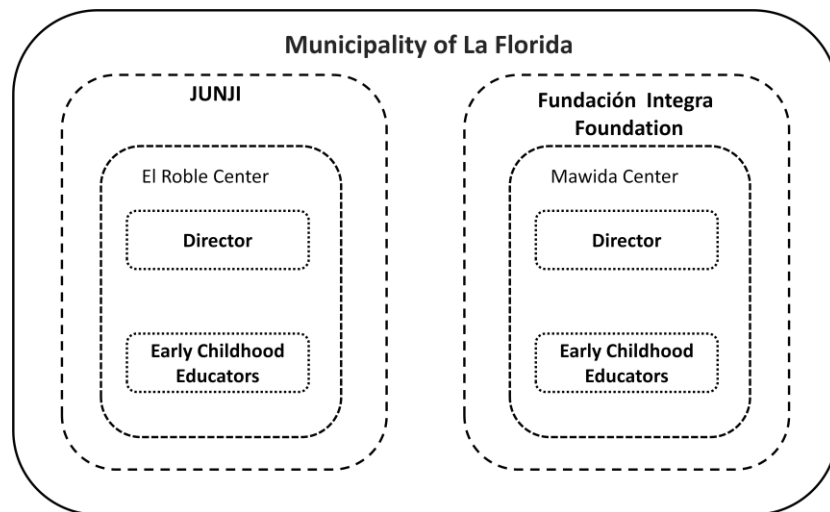
⁶ JUNJI and Fundación Integra foundation are the two main institutions providing free early education in Chile.

⁷ For the purpose of this study, a unit of analysis was defined as “the major entity being analyzed in a study”.

directors and early childhood educators (see Figure 1). The dotted lines in Figure 1 indicate the permeability of the boundaries between the cases and the contexts in which they exist, thus symbolizing the context's influence over each case.

The design of the study offers two important advantages. First, the inclusion of participants holding different positions at the centers increases the opportunities for extensive analysis, enhancing the insights into each single case. Second, a multiple case design allows analyzing each setting as well as the similarities and differences between settings. Because of the characteristics of each case, the possibility to compare them is a feature of the design that enhances the study's value. Each center that constitutes a case in the study belongs to one of the two main institutions that provide free early childhood education in Chile; one of those institutions (JUNJI) is administrated by the state, whereas the second one (Fundación Integra foundation) is a nonprofit private institution. Therefore, the analysis of data across cases will allow an initial approximation to understand differences and similarities regarding PD between the two main systems through which free early childhood education is provided in Chile.

Figure 1
Multiple case design



3.5 Procedures

3.5.1 Selection of criteria for early childhood educational centers and participants

The establishment of selection criteria for the early childhood educational centers and participants was the first step taken before beginning with the recruitment process. The selection criteria were created taken into account technical and practical reasons. On the one hand, technically, the criteria had to make possible the selection of two centers from different institutions but similar in terms of location, size and age range of children attended. On the other hand, considering the limited resources of time and money available for the study, the criteria needed to be specific enough in order to make the data collection feasible. Thus, the criteria used to select the childhood educational centers and participants were:

1. Centers geographically situated in Santiago, the capital of Chile. This is an urban area of Santiago Metropolitan Region. As an initial attempt to control socioeconomic status both centers had to be located in the same Municipality.
2. One center had to be selected from JUNJI and the other from Fundación Integra foundation, the two main institutions that offer free early childhood education in Chile.
3. Centers had to offer services to children in all ranges of age between 0 and 5 years.⁸ This criterion would increase the chance to recruit educators working with children of different ages.

⁸ JUNJI and Fundación Integra foundation provide services for children in six levels of age (see Table 1).

However, not all centers offer services for all levels of age. For the purpose of this study, the centers selected had to offer the full scope of levels of age.

4. Centers had to be big enough to have two classrooms per level of age, or at least two classrooms per most of the levels. Bigger centers were targeted because a larger staff would increase the chance to recruit the educators.
5. Centers directors had to show interest in participation of their centers in the study and have a sense of having a staff willing to participate in the study.
6. For site selection, the center director and at least two educators had to voluntarily agree to be interviewed. From the two educators to be chosen, one had to work with children between 0 and 3 years and the other with children between 3 and 5 years of age.

Once the criteria selection for centers and participants was defined, invitation letters for institutions, center directors, educators, as well as consent forms were created. Then, the recruitment process took place as detailed in the next section.

3.5.2 Recruitment

An invitation letter (Appendix A) was sent by e-mail to the head of the national department at JUNJI and Fundación Integra foundation. The letter introduced the study and requested authorization to contact centers from the institutions. Attached to the invitation letter, a summary with a broad description of the study was provided (Appendix D), as well as letters of initial contact and consent forms to be sent to centers' directors and educators once permission was given. The head of the national department of both institutions granted their authorization to conduct the study and appointed a contact professional for further communication concerning the logistics of the study.

From each institution's website, a list of all the centers located in Santiago was constructed. From this list, ten centers were initially eligible for participation in the study according to the criteria outlined above. Two of the ten centers initially selected were dismissed

because they were located in an extremely dangerous neighborhood. Another two centers located in one of the Municipalities with the highest income in Santiago were eliminated because priority was given to examine centers in more typical contexts. As a result, from the initial list of selected centers, only six of them were finally selected for preliminary contact. Four of these centers were located at the Municipality of La Florida and two of them were located at the Municipality of San Joaquín.

The contact professionals at each institution provided by the head of the national department were reached by phone to determine if the center information obtained in the webpage was correct and updated. The contact professional of JUNJI indicated that one of the selected centers located at the Municipality of San Joaquin would not be able to participate in the study because it was undertaking a major evaluation at that time. Since one of the criteria to select the centers was to have them both in the same Municipality, the remaining center at the Municipality of San Joaquin was discarded. Only the four centers located at the Municipality of La Florida remained on the list of centers to approach. The contact professionals were requested to inform the directors of the selected centers that they could be eventually invited to participate in the study and that they had institutional permission to do so in case they were interested.

Two centers were initially approached. A letter of initial contact (Appendix B) with an attached copy of the center director consent form (Appendix E) was sent by e-mail to the directors. The letter of initial contact described the study and outlined the requirements for the centers' participation. Directors from both centers replied favorably, accepting to be part of the study. The directors were contacted by phone to discuss in detail the next steps to be taken regarding the recruitment of educators for the study. The directors were asked to provide the

names of two educators to be initially approached, taking into consideration the criteria outlined above.

A follow up e-mail was sent to centers' directors attaching a personalized letter of initial contact (Appendix C) and consent form (Appendix F) to be distributed to educators at their centers. Center directors informed their educators about the study and distributed the letter of initial contact and consent form, indicating that participation in the study was voluntary and that, if they accepted, arrangements would be made so they could be interviewed during their work period. The letter of initial contact for educators described the study and what educators would be asked to do if they decided to be part of it. Four of the educators invited replied by phone within a few days stating their willingness to be interviewed. Arrangements were made with the director of each center to schedule the initial visit.

Initially, the recruitment process for the center from Fundación Integra foundation was very challenging since it was initially difficult to contact the head of the national department and therefore obtain the institutional authorization to approach the center. The department was eventually reached and authorizations were granted by the two institutions.

3.5.3 Participants

Two center directors and four early childhood educators participated in the study. The participants recruited were employed at two centers - El Roble and Mawida - providing free early childhood education in Chile. El Roble center is part of JUNJI, an institution managed and funded by the state, created in 1970 to offer early childhood education to children in a situation of social disadvantage. Mawida center is part of Fundación Integra foundation, a private, nonprofit institution created in 1990 that receives state funding to offer early childhood education to the poorest children in the country. Each of the centers where participants were

recruited provides early care and education to over 200 children between 3 months and 5 years of age. Both centers are located in the Municipality of La Florida which has an average rate of poverty compared with other Municipalities in Santiago.

Demographic information of participants is provided in Table 3.1. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to protect their confidentiality.

Table 3.1
Sample characteristics

<u>El Roble center</u>					
Participant Name	Participant Age	Years Worked at the Center	Years Worked in Current Position	Years Worked in ECE	Highest Educational Degree
María^a	56	3	9	36	University degree in ECE
Marta	56	6	33	33	University degree in ECE
Eliana	54	17	36	36	University degree in ECE
<u>Mawida center</u>					
Mónica^a	38	2	7	13	University degree in ECE
Carla	28	1	1	9	University degree in ECE
Victoria	40	7	15	21	University degree in ECE

Note. ECE= Early Childhood Education.

^a Center's director.

3.6 Data Collection

The techniques chosen for data collection were semi-structured interviews, PD document review and a reflective journal. Seven semi-structured interviews were held in the two early childhood education centers where participants were employed. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, which is the native language of the participants as well as the researcher. With the collaboration of center's directors, written material used to support PD activities in each center was collected and reviewed. The researcher kept a reflective journal where she gathered her

perceptions, reflections and questions during and after the visits to the centers. The researcher visited each center three times in order to complete the whole process of data collection.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

In educational research, qualitative interviews are often used to gather information that cannot be obtained using other methods such as surveys or observation (Tierney & Dilley, 2002). In the present study, interviews were chosen as the primary tool to collect data because they would allow a depth of understanding of the knowledge, experience and needs of early childhood educators in regard to their PD, which was the purpose of the study.

According to Talmy (2010, 2011) interviews used for research purposes might be conceptualized as a research instrument or as a social practice. As a research instrument interviews are perceived as a tool for gathering information, the data are granted a status of reports and the analysis of the information collected is focused in what is said, the content. Conversely, from a social practice perspective of the interview, the data are considered as accounts co-constructed between interviewer and interviewee. From this perspective the analysis of data is not only focused in what is said but also in how the data is produced, thus granting paramount importance to the communication process established between the interviewer and interviewee, which becomes itself a topic of investigation. Due to the nature of the research questions of this study, the interview was conceptualized as a research instrument and therefore the data collected was treated as reports of the participants' experiences, perceptions and thoughts regarding their professional development.

The interviews in the present study were in-depth, semi-structured and face to face in order to allow to the researcher and participants flexibility in questions and responses. The interviews were audio recorded and written field notes were used by the researcher in order to

record the appearance of any thoughts, feelings, ideas or questions as a result of the interaction taking place during the interview. Audio recordings were reviewed by the researcher after each interview to ensure that all questions had been covered. One of the participants was interviewed two times in order to further explore certain topics that seemed important but were not covered in depth during the first interview. Transcription of the interviews was conducted by the researcher once the process of data collection was completed.

The interviews lengths ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, the consent form was reviewed, the participants signed a copy that was collected by the researcher and kept another for their own records. The interviews started by gathering professional background information (Appendix G) followed by questions focused in exploring the knowledge, experience and needs of the participants regarding the PD activities they had participated in. The interview protocols for directors and educators interviews are provided in Appendix H and Appendix I respectively.

3.6.2 Review of professional development documents

Written material used in PD activities were gathered and reviewed in order to better understand the characteristics of PD activities experienced by participants at their centers. Both centers had material provided by their institutions to support the development of PD activities in formats such as manuals, books, power point presentations, and guidelines. Part of the PD material kept at the centers was targeted for directors and educators' use while some was designed to be used exclusively by directors. Some of the PD material was available for centers' employees in an electronic format at the institutional web pages while other was only available in hard copies held at the centers. Access to the PD material at the centers was facilitated by the directors who authorized the researcher to make copies of part of it. The researcher kept notes of

the purpose, format, and topics covered in the material as well as the directors' reports about how the material was used (or not) at their centers. For the purpose of this study, the data gathered through the review of PD documents were not analyzed separately from the interviews. Rather, they were used as tools to better understand how PD activities were implemented in the centers, and therefore to provide greater context to the experiences reported by participants regarding their own PD.

3.6.3 Reflective journal

The researcher kept a personal journal to record her observations and experiences thorough the entire process of data collection in order to provide a greater context to the information provided by the interviews and the review of PD material. From the most part, the notes were written on site during the time between interviews and at the researcher's workplace after the visits to the centers. The researcher documented her perceptions, reflections and comments about the content of the interviews as well as the characteristics of the communication established with participants. The journal also included the researcher's perceptions about the observed interactions between staff members and the general climate experienced at each center. Observations written in the reflective journal were not analyzed separately from the interviews but they provided rich information that was used when coding and identifying themes in the data generated through the interviews.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Method of data analysis

A thematic analysis was used as a method for analyzing the data. Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). The process of thematic analysis entails description and interpretation of data in rich

detail. Through thematic analysis data is often reduced, categorized and reorganized into thematic representations (Roulston, 2010). Although thematic analysis has been considered a method aligned with a neo-positivist approach to interview (Roulston, 2001), it is essentially a flexible method that can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the present study the data analysis focused on the content or what was said and not in how the talk was co-constructed. However, the study acknowledged the active role that the researcher necessarily plays in the process of identifying, selecting and reporting the themes.

3.7.2 Process of data analysis.

Thematic analysis was conducted on the data generated in each center through the interviews with the center's director and the early childhood educators. Since early childhood educator's view about their professional development has not been researched in Chile, each case's data was analyzed with the aim of providing rich descriptions rather than focusing on a particular aspect or theme. Observations and comments recorded by the researcher in the reflective journal were used as relevant and contextual information for the analysis of interviews at each center. Within each unit of analysis, themes or patterns were identified adopting an inductive approach to thematic analysis. This means that themes identified were more related to the data themselves than to a theoretical or analytic interest of the researcher. The analysis of data was conducted adopting as a guide the "phases" of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Phase one. The interviews were transcribed and read several times in order to become familiar with the breadth and depth of the content and interactions. An initial list of ideas about what was founded in the data and what was interesting about it was created.

Phase two. The data generated through the interviews at each centers (directors and educators in each center) was coded using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software. The interviews of centers' directors and educators were coded separately.

Phase three. Codes were combined to form overarching themes that were determined by their relevance (the number of instances of the theme across the data set) as well as their potential to capture something important about the data in relation to the research questions of the study.

Phase four. The coded data excerpts from which the generation of candidate themes was done were reviewed, considering again whether they formed a coherent pattern. In this stage, some additional data within themes that had been missed earlier was coded. Finally, a refined "thematic map" was created and the themes to be presented in the findings report were defined.

Phase five. The findings report (Chapter 4) was organized in four broad themes and the results were displayed separately for each case. Citations from interviews' excerpts included in the findings section were translated from Spanish to English by the researcher and reviewed by a Spanish speaking graduate student. A side by side translation of all the interview's cites included in the findings is displayed in Appendix J.

3.7.3 Cross case analysis

Data generated in each center was first analyzed separately. Once interviews were coded and themes were identified at each of the centers, a comparative analysis was conducted, identifying similarities and differences among them. Most of the broad themes identified in the analysis were common to both centers, but many of the specific contents involved in those broad themes were unique to each center. In order to present the particular findings identified at each center, the results in chapter 4 are displayed separately for each center under the broad themes

that centers had in common. Comparisons among centers as well as interpretations of some their similarities and differences in terms of the findings are displayed in chapter 5 of this study.

3.8 Triangulation and Validity

In the context of social research, validity is “the extent to which conclusions drawn from research provide an accurate description of what happened or a correct explanation of what happens and why” (Jupp, 2006, p. 311). Triangulation is a strategy frequently used to demonstrate validity in relation to qualitative studies (Roulston, 2010). There are different forms of triangulation, but in general the term is used to refer the observation of the research issue from at least two different points (Jupp, 2006). The present study used “triangulation of data”, which means that data were drawn from different sources; interviews, PD material available at the centers, and a reflective journal completed by the researcher.

The validity of the study was also addressed through “data sessions” in which a Spanish speaking graduate student met with the principal researcher on an ongoing basis to review the transcriptions and the accuracy of the coding, the themes, and the findings. Meetings were also held with the academic supervisor through the process of data analysis as well as with members of the supervisory committee at one time during the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Overview

The purpose of this study was to gain greater understanding of the state of early childhood professional development (PD) in Chile from the perspective of the staff employed in centers funded by the state to provide free early childhood education.

The findings in this chapter are summarized by the themes identified by the researcher in exploring the research questions guiding this study. Four broad themes were identified: different types of professional development, perceptions about the value and effectiveness of professional development activities, professional development needs, and working conditions.

The first three broad themes identified through the analysis are shared by both of the early childhood centers where the interviews were conducted. However, because of the unique characteristics of each center, the specific contents involved in the broad themes varied across centers and therefore they will be discussed separately under each broad theme in this chapter. The last theme, working conditions, was identified only in El Roble center and to some extent is an unexpected finding of the study because the topics covered by this theme were not directly explored through the questions posed by the interviewer.

4.2 Theme 1: Different Types of Professional Development

This theme outlines a description of the variety of PD activities offered to the staff employed at the two early childhood educational centers that constitute the cases of this study. Participants were asked about the PD opportunities offered by the institution to which their centers belonged and their own experiences of PD while employed at the centers. This theme includes the type and content of PD activities experienced by directors and educators at each center as well as the perceived weaknesses and strengths of those PD activities.

4.2.1 El Roble center

This section describes the PD activities available at El Roble center from the perspective of the center's director and two early childhood educators. The participants interviewed had over 30 years of trajectory working as early childhood educators and a substantial amount of knowledge and experience of PD activities.

JUNJI⁹, the institution to which El Roble center belongs, offers different types of PD opportunities for center's staff. Some of these PD activities are undertaken at the center while others are conducted in rented venues appropriate to host a large number of people. Most of the topics addressed in the PD activities are determined by the institution's central department taking into account the center's needs reported by the staff. As a way to support PD activities, the institution provides the center with written material addressing several topics such as "attachment", "self-care", "mediated learning", and "educational transitions" among others. This PD material is often developed by the institution itself and it is available to the centers' staff either through the institution's web page or at the center where hard copies are kept.

Ongoing training is one form in which PD occurs at the center. It includes activities such as talks, workshops and courses offered to the center's staff through the year. These activities are generally held in a special venue rented by the institution, usually a university facility. According to participants' experience, these PD activities address a variety of topics such as "language development", "special educational needs", "healthy lifestyle", "mediation strategies", "administration" and "good treatment". The duration of talks and workshops normally goes from half a day to two days as a maximum. The courses, which are scarcer, might last several months.

⁹ Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles.

Most of ongoing training activities are guided by professionals called “supervisors” who work at the institution’s central department and have in turn been trained to guide the training of directors, educators and technicians. A minority of the ongoing training activities are guided by professionals external to the institution such as psychologists, educators, speech therapists, and management experts. Both educators and the director considered that PD activities guided by professionals external to the institution were “better” because those professionals usually had a greater level of expertise in the subjects they taught. The following excerpts illustrate participant’s perceptions:

Most of it [ongoing training] is basic training replicated by professionals from the institution called supervisors, most of it. We had had courses implemented by other institutions such as universities, but those have been the minority, and those are very good in terms of quality, duration, which really improves you as a professional. (María)

There are training activities which are guided by supervisors from the institution. Ok? It is like... it is maybe not the suitable person to do it, because if it is something for children’s development, the best thing would be that it was done by a psychologist.

That’s what I mean. (Marta)

The staff has access to ongoing training activities through invitations sent from the institution’s central department. For example, for a particular workshop or course an invitation with a limited quota is sent to the center. The invitation can be addressed to the director, the educators, the technicians, or all of them. At the center, there is a professional in charge of coordinating attendance to PD activities who, in conjunction with the director, decides which educators should be given priority to participate in the offered PD activity.

Another form of PD available at the center is orientation, a PD activity where recently hired educators are asked to participate. During the orientation, more experienced professionals from the central department present the administrative statute to the new educators, informing them about how the institution works. Since orientation is done in a single session, there is not much time to inform new educators about the specific characteristics of the center they will be joining and the particular tasks they will be expected to do. From the director's perspective, the superficiality of the orientation causes an excess of workload to the staff because neither the director nor the educators have the time to train the new colleague once she is sent to the center after the orientation. As the director explained:

Currently, there is a department in charge of orientation. They display a general video and talk about the administrative statute during an entire morning or three or four hours. The new people are informed about what is done at the institution in general terms, and then, what do they say? They say that the director should give an orientation to new educators ... but it is very difficult... because our job is very dynamic. At the beginning of the year we set goals related to the work with our children that we have to accomplish by the end of the year. Therefore you can't stop the work in order to teach a new person in a particular group of children because that group of children has to keep going, keep going, keep going. (María)

Along with ongoing training and the orientation session, learning communities are a third type of PD activities available for the staff. The director described learning communities in this way: "Learning communities are part of the staff's continuing education and, differently from the ongoing training, they are a reflection of our own practices" (María). There are two learning communities at the center: the "learning community of the educative unit" which is formed by all

the members of the center and guided by the director; and the “classroom’s learning community” which is formed by the educator and the technicians of a particular classroom. Learning communities gather twice a month between 2:30 and 5:30 pm to review and reflect about their pedagogical practices. During that period of time attention to children is suspended at the center to allow the staff attend the learning communities’ meeting. However, attention to children cannot be completely cancelled because there are some children who need to be at the center for extended hours and therefore not all the staff can participate in the learning communities twice a month. As the director noted: “We are never able to have all the people, generally there are six technicians less” (María). The director valued learning communities over other forms of PD because, in her view, learning communities allow participants an opportunity to reflect about their own pedagogical practices, creating knowledge based on their own experiences as opposed to receiving it from an external “expert”. She remarked:

I consider the CAUE [learning community of the educative unit] a more productive continuing education practice because you are analyzing your own work, and also because to construct from your own knowledge is more meaningful for the person... in the CAUE there is a construction from your own knowledge, which is not always the starting point when you go to other types of training. (María)

The director also acknowledged that learning communities might not yield good results if participants are not “ready” for them, in the sense of having interest and discipline to engage in discussion and reflection about their own practices:

People have to be ready because during the learning communities’ meetings you sometimes find colleagues coming in and out of the room... yes, because we are used to the technical meeting, structured, with information... but we are not used, for instance, to

analyze something from our own heritage...we are used to be given knowledge because we were educated in institutions that transmitted knowledge to us, so we are used to receive knowledge from someone. (María)

Despite the important role that communities of learning seemed to play in the PD of the staff, the director only talked about them in detail after the interviewer specifically enquired about it during a second interview. Similarly, communities of learning were hardly named by educators as a form of PD. In fact, educators referred to communities of learning as “meetings of analysis”. This might not necessarily mean that educators did not find communities of learning useful, but rather it could suggest that educators were not familiar with the term “communities of learning”, nor to consider them as part of their PD. The director was asked to share her thoughts about this finding, which are depicted in the following excerpt:

Interviewer (IR) Why is it that when I have asked people about PD nobody talked about communities of learning? But then, when I read the institutional documents I realized that is part of it, but nobody talked to me about that.

Interviewee (IE) I believe it is because acquiring knowledge through transmission is more valued.

IR As if that were considered more like training...

IE Right, like a person who masters the topic... the fact of us reflecting began since democracy came back, when groups of women started to work together and from their own knowledge began to build greater knowledge. You see?... and in this country, professionally speaking, I feel there is a lot of work to do in the sense of ourselves being agents in the construction of our own knowledge. In fact, not everybody investigates,

searches, and improves herself by their own initiative. If somebody does not give it to you [knowledge], you do not improve. If you do not take a course taught by an organization, you do not feel trained. (María)

4.2.2 Mawida center

This section describes the PD activities available at Mawida center from the perspective of the center director and two early childhood educators. All the participants hold a degree in early childhood education and had several years of experience in the field, although one of the educators earned her degree only a year before the interview was conducted.

Similar to the case of El Roble center, the staff at Mawida center also has the opportunity to participate in different types of PD offered by Fundación Integra foundation, the institution to which the center belongs. However, differently to El Roble center, Mawida center operates with a more “hierarchical” or “centralized” model of PD, where the director receives most of the training and then is expected to “transfer” new knowledge to the rest of the staff. The word “cascade” was used by the center’s director as a metaphor to describe how PD activities were implemented at the center:

In certain occasions educators go out [outside the center] for training but it is infrequent. Generally, is the director who attends the trainings and she “transfers” what she learned to her team during the ongoing training sessions... from my point of view this is like a cascade, I have to absorb and master the topic in order to transfer it to my team of educators, and also in order to allow my educators to do their job with the children and guide the technicians in their classrooms. (Mónica)

The staff have access to the institutional “documentation center” which holds written material that can be used to support PD activities. At anytime the staff can borrow books, articles

and booklets from a variety of topics related to early childhood education such as “childhood and health”, “how to learn math”, “motivation for reading”, “family involvement” and “education and play”. In addition, the director, as the leader of PD at the center, receives at the beginning of each year a set of guidelines, power points and videos to help her prepare PD activities at the center.

One of the main PD activities in which the staff participates each year is the “beginning of year intensive training”. At the beginning of each year, before the children begin to attend the center, there is a mandatory 3 days intensive training for the entire staff. The purpose of this intensive training is to introduce and train the staff in the topics relevant for the goals that the institution’s educational department has set for the academic year.

The “beginning of year intensive training” is guided by the director with the support of an experienced educator. For the purpose of the training they are called “narrators” because they are in charge of transmitting key topics and guidelines to the rest of the staff. The “narrators” are in turn trained by professionals from the institution’s educational department at the end of each academic year during a two-full day period.

After the “beginning of year intensive training” is over, the staff has further PD opportunities through ongoing training. During the year, the staff is regularly trained in topics relevant to the objectives the institution has set for that year. “The topics are appropriate to the foundation [Fundación Integra]” said the director, while one educator further explained it:

These are topics corresponding to the changes going on in the field of early childhood education, related to policies, related to the institution, in this case the institution trains in those topics, for instance the children’s rights approach, wellbeing, the work with

families, or things that the institution incorporates, they [the institution] train us about it.

(Victoria)

As part of the ongoing training available to the staff, the director attends to a full day training session approximately once a month. This training is usually guided by professionals at the institution's educational department that hold some kind of specialization in the subject matter.

As the director commented:

Most of them are early childhood educators...they have done postgraduate studies, they have advanced in their improvement, and some of them began as educators or directors, and today they are leaders of the department...they have like a career in the foundation and they are who prepare the training sessions jointly with the central department, because everything comes from there, there is a special department that determines all the topics to be addressed during the year..." (Mónica).

Once the director has been trained, she has the responsibility to transmit the gained knowledge to educators and technicians. This is done in a half a day session once a month, during which none children attend in order to allow the staff to dedicate exclusively to the training. Only occasionally educators have access to training outside the center, as the director recognized, "that is not as frequently as it is in my case" (Mónica).

Besides the ongoing training sessions for educators occurring on a monthly basis, once a week an "educators' meeting" takes place, whereby the director and educators gather to discuss current situations, plan future activities, share relevant information and receive feedback and support from one another. Even though PD is not the primary purpose of these weekly meetings, sometimes they are used as a PD activity in which the director or a designed educator share information and facilitate a discussion about a particular topic in which they have some level of

expertise. In turn, educators who participated in the meeting have the responsibility to transfer the knowledge gained to the technicians at their classrooms.

A third modality of PD activities described by participants was academic degrees or certificates. In the case of the director and educators, the institution subsidizes participants in obtaining 25% of the cost of any program of study, as one educator reported “they [the institution] give us the opportunity to study, whether it is a diploma or a degree, or if you want you can specialize as a speech therapist, etc... they support you with a percentage in this case, so you pay less for your studies” (Victoria). In the case of technicians, the institution pays the totality of the tuition fees if they decide to earn a degree in early childhood education: “technicians are different, they have the possibility to study early childhood education and they are paid 100%, but only in some universities” (Victoria). Participation in academic studies is usually done after working hours and can last until very late at night. Carla, an educator who was grateful for having recently completed her early childhood education degree with the institution’s support, reported about the schedule: “I arrived [daily] at the institute at seven [pm] and left at eleven or eleven thirty”.

4.3 Theme 2: Perceptions About the Value and Effectiveness of Professional Development Activities

This theme involves the perceptions shared by directors and educators regarding the relevance of PD in general and the usefulness of PD activities experienced by them. Questions about professional learning through PD and the impact of PD activities on children and families were explored.

4.3.1 El Roble center

In terms of the relevance assigned to PD, participants unanimously agreed that PD activities were very important, as the center's director expressed: "The fact that we are continuously improving is an imperative need for children's development" (María). However, participants had different perceptions regarding how much they had learned from PD activities offered by the institution. On the one hand, educators commented that through PD activities over the years they had been able to update their knowledge and develop new valuable tools for their work at the classroom, which in turn had a positive impact on children under their care. Referring to what she had learned through PD one educator said, "new ways of working, mainly related to changes, to what is relevant today compared with before, new ways to evaluate, to plan, to understand children's knowledge... it helps you to see things differently, and maybe transmit it [knowledge] in others ways that are better for them [the children]" (Marta). Another educator stated: "I have learned to detect. With both the course on special educational needs and the good treatment diploma I acquired tools to detect" (Eliana). Nonetheless, educators recognized that PD activities were often "average" in quality and not completely "what they would have liked". They suggested that PD effectiveness could be improved by taking some measures such as increasing the duration of PD activities, allowing a greater number of educators to participate, and selecting topics relevant for the work at the classroom on a daily basis.

On the other hand, contrary to educators' perceptions, the director commented that even though she had participated at good training sessions at the institution, those were more an exception than the rule. She recognized that she had learned more through her own effort and motivation than from the PD activities offered by the institution. "Honestly, and I have always

acknowledged it, I have not learned too much with training at the institution”, she remarked. In fact, she said that, instead of attending the training sessions she would rather stay at the center where she felt her presence was more useful:

Usually, the training giving by the institution, and I think it’s is due to a money shortage, is very short, very brief, not only for me. I almost don’t go to training, except when it is strictly necessary, because I consider that it is a waste of time, I believe it is more productive to stay here [at the center], I prefer to be sent a power point presentation to get the knowledge... I am more needed her in my center, running here and there, making sure everything works ok. (María)

4.3.2 Mawida center

PD activities were regarded by participants as an essential aspect of their careers and an important support to their jobs. Both educators and the director were grateful to have ample and systematic access to PD, and expressed they had certainly learned and developed as professionals through the PD activities offered by the institution. In particular, participants appreciated that PD activities allowed them to stay updated regarding new tendencies and practices in early childhood education. They recognized that, as a result of updating their knowledge and developing new abilities, their work with children and families had been positively impacted. Participants’ favorable perceptions about the value and effectiveness of PD activities experienced by them are depicted by the following quotes:

Besides what I learned when I was studying at the university, the training for me has happened here at the foundation. It is very powerful for me because the fact that you are constantly being trained does not happen everywhere, that you are given supplies, new

contents... all the years we [the staff] keep progressing and acquiring new knowledge, incorporating new topics, and that clearly has an impact in children's learning. (Mónica)

The institution has kept me updated in terms of the topics currently pertinent. For example, I have learned about the curriculum guidelines, about how children learn, and new theories of learning. Today children are changing... I can say that, through knowledge, I have been adjusting to the current child... I get them to learn better... work with families has also benefited with me been updated, in terms of knowing how to reply to all families' inquiries. That is. And also, you know, the work with the technician, because I am not the only one who works with the children... because personal relationships are also addressed [at the training], that has been a contribution too and I can see my development as a professional in that too. (Victoria)

Participants reported that the support of professionals in higher positions as a factor that contributed to make PD activities a positive learning experience for them. For example, Carla reported that the director had been an ally in the learning processes she had engaged as a student pursuing an early childhood education degree while simultaneously working as a technician at the center: "Yes the director has supported me a lot regarding any questions about what I was been taught [at the institute], the topics and all those things" (Carla). The director in turn mentioned that "supervisors" and specialists working at the educational department in the institution were a contribution in terms of her PD: "The educational department and the supervisors make high efforts to give us good training sessions; it is not a waste of time" (Mónica).

Furthermore, in terms of opportunities for PD, participants appreciated the institution's

policy of encouraging employees to apply to higher positions within the institution, making possible to “build a career”. In fact, one of the educators interviewed was a former technician and the current director was an educator when she joined the institution.

That is another option we have here, we build a career. You do not stay in your initial position, you have the chance to keep progressing. For instance, I began as an educator, today I am a director, tomorrow, if the right conditions are given, one can apply to a supervisor position, and you can reach a leadership position. (Mónica)

Finally, in addition to the overall positive evaluation of experiences regarding PD activities, educators also indicated that there were some aspects that could be improved. Carla expressed her concern with the lack of time to put into practice the knowledge and abilities acquired in PD activities: “sometimes you cannot get everything done... what happens is that the time, the time... we have to be all day in the classroom... there are thirty two children and we are two persons [the staff]. Sometimes the amount of time does not help, because it is scarce” (Carla). Victoria clearly remarked that PD offered by the institution would be better if there were more chances for educators to receive training from specialists external to the institution:

I have learned very much in this institution and I am grateful that the institution has given to me all this knowledge, but I tell you again, I believe there are many things that need to be improved, it [access to PD activities] should not be so divided in director, educators, technicians, everybody should have the chance to receive training, I mean outside, not only here at the institution. (Victoria)

4.4 Theme 3: Professional Development Needs

This theme addresses the specific needs concerning PD activities reported by directors and educators at each center. Participants were asked about the characteristics of activities that

would fulfill their PD needs and how such activities should be implemented. Needs regarding technical aspects of PD implementation, access to PD activities, specific topics, and economical support for PD were identified in both centers.

4.4.1 El Roble center

A comprehensive orientation was one of the PD needs raised by participants. They considered orientation as a very important activity for both, the professional development of new educators as well as the center's efficient operation. However, due to its current short duration and limited content, orientation was considered an under-utilized PD activity. Participants argued that educators would benefit from a more intensive orientation where new educators could gain a clear idea about the characteristics of the tasks they were expected to perform. One educator argued:

We should have a more intensive orientation session... new people arriving at the institution encounter this reality [at the center] and they want to leave, the technicians want to leave right away. They are not advised about how the reality is, what does it mean to work with 32 children, that they come to do that... it should be a multiple orientation, intensive, with an initial assessment. (Eliana)

According to the director, a deeper orientation would not only benefit new educators but also current educators. She mentioned that, since orientations were short and superficial, the effort of training new educators fell on senior educators, who were not given the time to train new educators. She recognized that new educators were introduced to their jobs "almost down the road, to the extent that the poor educators [seniors] are able to". The director described this situation as a "burden" for the staff and stated that, ultimately, the price of not having a more comprehensive orientation for new educators is paid by the children:

It is a burden... in the centers there is a lot of long medical leaves as a result of stress.

This is a chain related to low wages and the whole story, it is terrible. So, it is a burden that you bear, and the worst thing is that it would not be so important if it were a burden for the director or for the staff, but children pay the price. I mean, children's education is affected by this kind of things, because there is no a good orientation, a deep orientation.

(María)

The need for longer and deeper PD activities was perceived by participants not only limited to the orientation, but extended to ongoing training activities such as workshops and courses.

Participants thought that a longer duration was needed for almost all ongoing training activities in order to delve deep into the topics. In this regard, one educator, when describing a course on "healthy lifestyles" commented: "but the truth is that, in that occasion [during the course] I emphasized in the evaluation that 20 hours are not enough" (Eliana). She suggested that instead of having many short duration PD activities, it would be better to dedicate more time to fewer topics:

What is happening? Which is the problem we see? We are trained in this and that... and sometimes you cannot put it into practice because there are so many things, so many topics simultaneously... so there are many things at once and it is like the saying "to bite off more than one can chew". (Eliana)

Another PD need mentioned by one educator was access to ongoing training for a greater number of educators at the center. She said that every time there was an opportunity to take a course, workshop or talk, only few educators could attend at a time. This was problematic in her view because, even though educators who attended the training shared the content with their colleagues at a later time, the transmission of information was inevitably partial:

It should not be [ongoing training] for the person, we have always said that. If it is directed to educators, it should be for all of them. We receive [training] and then we transfer it [to colleagues who didn't attend the training], but down the road things can be lost... so training should be more massive... because it is very difficult to transmit that [the content learned] at a later time and that everybody see what you saw and make the changes. Do you understand me? ... There is no time. From my point of view, it is useless if only I receive the training and then I march by my own and we do not march together. (Marta)

A further PD need repeatedly discussed by participants was that of more opportunities to attend ongoing training activities guided by external professional. Two important facets related to this need were discussed by participants. First, the fact that professionals external to the institutions had a greater level of expertise compared with professionals at the institution in charge of guiding ongoing training activities. Second, according to participants, direct access to PD activities guided by external professionals would prevent the “dilution” or “loss of content” that often occurred when internal professionals received training from external experts and then passed it on to the center’s staff. As indicated by one educator: “a professional from JUNJI is sent to a specialized training at a university, and then she gives us an extract of what she learned...” (Eliana). Thus, participants emphasized the importance of delivering the most specialized training to those working directly with children on a daily basis rather than professionals who did not work at a classroom level. With regard to this PD need the director was emphatic in expressing her judgment:

For example, we are taught reading promotion [during ongoing training activities] by a supervisor who in turn had taken a course on that subject. Then she replicates the course.

But, who works directly with children? It is the people who are at the classroom. I have said it again and again here at my institution: the best quality training should be directed to educators who are in the classroom, directly, because the person who comes to supervise is not working here all day. Who loses with this? The children and families lose. (María)

Regarding the topics to be covered by PD activities, participants indicated the need for further training in a variety of them. “Language and communication” for instance, was considered critical by both the director and the educators. As one educator stated: “I think all areas are important, but I believe we need to go deep in language and communication, and that is scarce right now” (Eliana). In the same vein, another educator further reported: “I think language is what they [children] need because, according with all our experience, there is a deficiency in that area” (Marta). In addition, “emotional development” was also considered a critical topic by educators, even more important than language: “arranging them [the topics] by order of priority, I would go for emotional development and good treatment, language and communication” (Eliana); “to me, children’s emotional development is more important than other things” (Marta). Related to emotional development, one educator said she would appreciate to be trained in “behavioral management” in order to cope with conflicts in her classroom:

I would like to take a course on behavioral management, I have not had the opportunity... it is a need, I see it in my level... you are faced with conflicts among children in the classroom. Those conflicts are perhaps related to the way children are raised in their families, but you don’t have the tools... (Marta).

Other topics such as assessment, pedagogical planning, psychology and neurosciences

were mentioned by the director as a need in terms of PD activities.

A further need highlighted by participants was greater economic support and incentive for postgraduate studies. Participants explained that it was very difficult to pursue postgraduate studies because the cost of programs was very high for them, especially considering that they needed to support their families economically. One educator suggested that a possible solution could be a shared financing of postgraduate studies between the institution and the educator willing to undertake postgraduate studies:

I think we could maybe have some kind of shared financing because, for example, taking into account my reality [financial] right now, I could not pay a Master program, and there are many educators in the same situation. I am the head of my house, I provide for my family and pay the studies to my children, so my first priority are my children. (Eliana)

Apart from the high cost of postgraduate studies, participants indicated that even if they had the economic support to earn a new degree, they would not be paid more by the institution in recognition of their new degree. Therefore, they emphasized the need that greater levels of formal education were accompanied by an increase in their wages, as was the case in other educational institutions. In the words of the director:

Academic degrees are not recognized in the institution. I mean, you can have a PhD but if you are the director the maximum you can achieve is rank number fourteen, and there is nothing else beyond that. There is no payment for your improvement, which it does exist in other public institutions, but no here. (María)

Lastly, participants considered the improvement of the initial training of early childhood educators to be an imperative need. The topic of initial training was not intentionally brought up by interviewer's questions because, for the purpose of this study, PD was defined as "the

continuous process in which early childhood educators strengthen their knowledge and skills as teachers after they have completed their initial education” and therefore the definition of PD did not include initial training. However, in the understanding that PD can also be conceived as a continuing process that begins at the undergraduate level, participants discussed the poor quality of early childhood educators’ initial training and unanimously perceived it as problematic. For instance, one educator, aware of the critical role of initial training for subsequent PD in educators’ career, said: “What is very clear is that it is necessary to improve the curriculum [of initial training]. Later, when the educator is working in situ she has to have access to both formal and informal PD training” (Eliana). Marta, another educator, stated that early childhood educators’ initial training had deteriorated over time. Nowadays, she noted, the new generations are less committed to the job and ignore basic knowledge related to their profession that they should know well. The director confirmed educators’ perspectives. In their words:

I think we [educators] were more committed with children’s education in the past... I am very concern about the initial training of educators because the foundation has to be strong. I think there is a need there [in initial training]... I observe students during their internships and say to myself “she should know that”. It is not my responsibility to teach them. So, if I compare current initial training with the one given years ago, I feel there is a need... I believe we could have a very serious problem here in Chile because education [initial training] has changed. (Marta)

This center is a place for internships, so here I see the deficiency. Educators who are supervising student’s internships literally tell me: “I don’t know what these girls did during their four year training”. There are many things they didn’t learn during the four

years... for example, they didn't learn psychology, or all the stuff related to curriculum, planning, evaluation, they don't have any idea. (María)

The director further pointed out that the deficiencies in the initial training of educators interfered with the center's adequate functioning. She explained that, when a new educator with a poor initial training joined the center, it was an stressful period for them who "have to do a big effort because they don't have the tools", but also for the rest of the staff, who expected the arrival of a new professional to support them in their tasks instead of becoming a burden:

Here you see a very nice center because we make an effort for quality. I can very confidently say that here we do things very well, consciously, but the cost of it is enormous because of the deficiencies in training the new colleagues arrive with, and also because there is a shortage of staff and resources are not the best. (María)

4.4.2 Mawida center

The first main PD need reported by educators was direct access to PD activities guided by experts, regardless if those experts were from the institution or external to it. The fact that most PD activities were guided by the director was perceived by educators as a limitation because they thought that, in some cases, a trainer with greater expertise was needed. The model adopted by the institution to implement PD mandates the center's director to receive direct training from experts (internal or external to the institution) and then to transmit the knowledge gained to her staff. As one educator described it: "It does not happen often [direct training guided by experts] because we cannot go out of the center too much. It is mainly directed to the center's director, she attends to trainings and then transmits it to us" (Carla). This model of PD implementation was considered unfair by one of the educators, as shown in her comment:

During the year we have ongoing training sessions once a month, but here is the issue that is detrimental for all of us [educators]: only the director receives training [direct training guided by experts] and then she delivers it to educators and technicians through the year... It would be ideal that all educators could receive more training, not only the director, because I feel that, although she does not do a bad job transmitting the information, it would be more valid for us [educators] to receive a little bit more training [from experts]. (Victoria)

Educators expressed the need to have access to PD activities guided by experts because in spite of their periodic participation in PD activities guided by the director at the center, they felt that addressing some topics in more depth was at times needed. This is depicted in the following excerpt, in which one educator pointed out the need for a more specialized training, seemingly trying at the same time not to give the impression she was criticizing the current model:

IE Right, because one does not say that the training sessions are like very superficial.

IR One does not say that?

IE No, I do not say that, but it would be good to go in depth a little bit more, and that someone could answer specific things when I have some questions. (Victoria)

When asked what kind of things would improve their PD experiences, educators said:

“To have a professional suitable for the topic... a specialist in the subject” (Carla), “that the training were guided by specialists in the topics taught” (Victoria).

Participants indicated that a variety of specific topics needed to be addressed in PD activities. For example, Carla stated she would benefit from receiving training on “learning assessment” and “behavioral management”; Victoria indicated she needed more knowledge in

“language development”; and Mónica, the director, said she would like to deepen “wellbeing” as a topic for PD activities:

Guidelines on how to help or how to respond to difficult cases, children with disruptive behavior... because here there are very vulnerable children [socially disadvantaged], most of them are vulnerable, and there are very disruptive children who hit their peers and educators...well, we are taught psychology but sometimes there are complicated cases including family issues. One has to play the role of a psychologist, doctor, nurse, everything. (Carla)

I am interested about language. In fact, I want to see speech therapists because often families ask many questions about “Why my child does not speak yet?”, and one does one’s best to give them a good answer, but my answer would be more accurate if I had more knowledge on language. (Victoria)

Wellbeing for example is an essential issue for me, because it is very wide, it is crosswise... wellbeing cross all what can possibly happen during a day... I am talking about wellbeing not only as a topic but also as a public policy and we have to take responsibility for that too, in the same way we did with the policy about the participation of families. (Mónica)

Greater economic support to pursue postgraduate studies was a need in which all participants agreed. Participants acknowledged as a positive initiative the institution’s new policy of covering the full cost of tuition for technicians who wanted to earn a degree in early childhood education. However, participants resented the fact that the benefit was not the same for the entire staff. In the case of educators, who already hold an early childhood education degree, the institution only pays 25% of the cost of postgraduate programs they might want to take. That

percentage was considered insufficient taking into account both, the comparative low wages of educators and the high cost of postgraduate education in Chile. One educator expressed frustration due to the lack of enough economic support to pursue postgraduate studies:

I would like that the coverage percentage for educators and the director were a little bit more... with one's salary it is not enough, even if one wants to develop as a professional... because to study in this country is not cheap now... so, why not everyone at the foundation is given the same opportunity [of studying] as the technicians, who are paid 100%? Do you understand me? (Victoria)

The director further explained the need for more economic support in this way:

I have like a dream, that we could have more training opportunities, and that these were accompanied by greater resources... because, for instance, there is currently a program that covers the technicians' early childhood education degree, it is incredibly beneficial, the girls are studying and they are taking the most of it, and that is very good, but the master programs, the postgraduate programs have a higher cost... it is difficult to afford those programs because there are families involved. So, it is not lack of interest, the interest is there but sometimes one cannot cover the costs, so you simply are not able to do it. (Mónica)

4.5 Theme 4: Working Conditions

The theme “working conditions” was identified only in El Roble center. Although a few of the topics that this theme covers were also discussed by participants at Mawida center, they were not emphasized enough by participants to constitute a theme. On the contrary, in the case of El Roble center it was clear that participants felt the need to express themselves about certain characteristics of their jobs that were impacting the quality of their working lives. Even though

participants were not directly asked about their working conditions, while replying to other questions posed by the interviewer they repeatedly mentioned working characteristics such as lack of time, large group size, low staff-child ratio and increasingly administrative work as factors that made their job more demanding and difficult. Participants did not talk about these working conditions exclusively in relation to PD but as factors that affected all areas of their job.

Lack of time was one of the main concerns for participants. They explained that it was very difficult to accomplish all the tasks they were responsible for within their working hours. As the director summarized the problem: “There is no time. That is a limitation here at the institution, it is terrible, and it works against everything, against your entire job” (Mónica). Participants reported that they often worked extra hours, leaving their jobs at 18:00 or 19:00 pm instead of 17:20 pm, which was the official end of the working day. The lack of time was connected, among other things, to an increase on administrative work, “this is weighing a lot at the centers, all of them. It happens to me too. There is too much workload at the institutions, a lot of paperwork” (Marta). Eliana further stated:

When I began working as an educator I had to do my planning, the children’s weight and height, and attendance, those were all the administrative tasks. And now, there is an incredibly amount... you have to be constantly collecting data, if I could show you the folders, there are data and more data, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and tables and tables of data. (Eliana)

Educators perceived administrative work as a time consuming activity of their job that was detrimental to the direct work with children. As one educator commented, sometimes they needed to do administrative work even while they were in the classroom, “in a corner, in a table over there because they [educators] also have to pay attention to children... so, the real meaning

of early childhood education is lost, because the presence of educators in the classroom is very important” (Eliana). Educators suggested that, considering the nature and quantity of administrative work, it should be performed by an administrative specialist, allowing educators to focus on pedagogical tasks.

Low staff-child ratio was another characteristic mentioned by participants as part of their working conditions. There was an average of 26 to 30 children per classroom. The institution was working toward the goal of having at least one technician and one educator in each classroom. However, there were still some levels in which one educator was in charge of two classrooms, having to alternate her presence in each of them. One educator commented that large class size was one of the main reasons why many young early childhood educators, after doing the internship, decided to work in a school instead of staying at the center:

A girl was here [at the center] doing her internship, she was working with 32 children, she was troubled... she found an opportunity in a school and accepted it. I asked her why she did so if she was being well evaluated here and maybe had chances to be hired by the institution, and she said: “no, because, really, there [at the school] there are 15 children, they are older, so I do not have to change clothes and all that”. (Eliana)

The director recognized that the institution had been doing efforts to increase the staff-child ratio but she also indicated that more work in that direction was needed, highlighting that the attention of socially disadvantaged children made the need of more personnel even greater:

Every year we progress a little further, but the resources are always insufficient. For example, this institution should have one educator in each level, because you do not have a teacher every two classrooms in first grade... and here, in the transition levels, you have one educator for two levels. That is the story, and we are not an institution that gives

service to the middle class, we attend to the lowest income quintile. Do you see? (María).

The director also considered the low status of the early childhood education profession as an element that affected negatively the working condition of educators. She explained that the cause of low status was the poor initial training of early childhood educators and argued that they should receive a more substantial training, as was the case with other professions:

Yes, but I feel it [the training] is too basic, I feel that more could be demanded from early childhood educators if they were be given more, I also feel that is the reason why we are like downplayed within the education field itself... I feel that, in the same way in which physicians, lawyers, psychologists, nutritionists are trained, early childhood educators should also be trained with the same quality. (María)

The director continued, suggesting that the poor initial training and the low status of the early childhood education profession was in turn connected with low wages:

To give an example, it is related with the low wages in my own institution, I mean, a nutritionist that is just joining the institution earn much more than an educator, the social workers earn much more than us. That is ridiculous in an institution dedicated to education. (María)

4.6 Summary

The findings depict the reported experiences, opinions and thoughts of early childhood educators regarding PD activities in which they have participated while employed in state-funded institutions delivering early childhood education.

Participants at both centers shared their experiences in a wide range of PD activities including orientation; ongoing training in the form of workshops, talks and courses; learning communities; beginning of the year intensive training; diplomas and degrees. PD was regarded

by all participants as an essential component in their careers as early childhood educators. However, not all participants shared the same perception about the effectiveness of the PD activities in which they had participated. For some, PD activities did not constitute a big support for their practice, while other participants considered PD activities extremely useful. Regardless of their perceptions about PD effectiveness, all participants agreed that there were many aspects of PD implementation that needed to be improved in order to maximize the potential benefits of PD activities.

Based on their experiences, participants identified and discussed several needs of PD that they thought were important to take into account when planning future PD activities at the centers. Those needs encompassed greater duration and depth in orientation sessions and ongoing training activities; access to ongoing training activities for a greater number of educators; more opportunities to receive training guided by subject matter experts both inside and outside the centers; more training focused in topics related to language development, socioemotional development, and assessment; greater economic support to pursue postgraduate studies; and improvement of the initial training of early childhood educators.

In one of the centers participants discussed several working conditions that affected their overall daily experiences at work. Lack of time, increasing administrative work, and low staff-child ratio were considered by participants as factors that hampered their work at the center, including but transcending PD activities.

The next chapter will provide a discussion of the findings within the existing research and literature on early childhood professional development. It will also present the limitations and strengths of this present study and explore possible areas for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Overview

The purpose of this study was to better understand the state of early childhood professional development (PD) in Chile from the perspective of the staff employed in two early childhood center centers funded by the state to provide free early childhood education. Two center's directors and four early childhood educators participated in face to face semi-structured interviews that were categorized and analyzed using an inductive approach to thematic analysis. Four broad themes were identified in exploring the research questions guiding this study: different types of professional development, perceptions about the value and effectiveness of professional development activities, professional development needs, and working conditions. In this chapter, the significant findings within each of the broad themes identified in the study are summarized, interpreted and discussed in the context of previous literature in the area when applicable. Recommendations for the improvement of PD implementation are outlined. The strengths and limitations of the present study are discussed and directions for future research on early childhood PD are suggested.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

5.2.1 Theme 1: different types of professional development

Participants of this study described several types of PD activities in which they had participated including orientation, beginning of the year training, ongoing training, learning communities and diplomas and degrees. From those types of PD, ongoing training and diplomas and degrees were mentioned by participants in both centers. Orientation and learning communities were mentioned only in El Roble center, whereas beginning of the year intensive training was a PD activity exclusive to Mawida center. Apart from the difference in some of the

types of PD activities undertaken, centers seemed to have different approaches to PD implementation. Mawida center operated with a much more “centralized” mode of conducting PD activities, in which the director was the person who received most of the training guided by experts and then transmitted it to the rest of the staff in a “cascade mode”, as the center’s director described it. By contrast, at El Roble center educators as well as the director had the opportunity to access training guided by experts.

The different types of PD described by participants in this study are consistent with much of the literature on early childhood PD. The activities identified by participants as orientation, ongoing training and beginning of the year training can all be considered variations of what Sheridan et al. (2009) called “specialized training”, which includes activities such as conferences, workshops and professional meetings designed to impart knowledge in an attempt to impact professional practice. The pursuing of diplomas and degrees described by participants in both centers as an important but insufficient opportunity of PD corresponds to “formal education”, one of the forms that PD takes in early childhood education according to Zaslow and Martinez-Beck (2006). Lastly, learning communities, one of the PD activities undertaken at El Roble center, corresponds to the term “communities of practice” coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) and used in educational research to indicate practices where teachers learn from one another as they engage in student’s work (Sheridan et al., 2009). It was interesting to the researcher that educators interviewed almost did not mention this form of PD activity although it is officially established at the institution to which El Roble center belongs. The center’s director talked in detail about learning communities only after specific inquiry about it during a second interview, revealing that in fact learning communities were an important and unique form that PD took at the center. It could be suggested that the lack of prominence of learning communities

in participants' discourse is related to a low value placed on reflection and discussion among peers as a valid avenue for learning. This hypothesis is consistent with the view of the center's director, who pointed out that early childhood educators were trained to associate learning with receiving knowledge from an "expert", rather than with a creative process resulting from engaging in peer discussion and mutual feedback with their communities of practice.

Coaching, described in the literature as one the most promising types of PD in terms of its impact in teacher practices, (Ramey, Crowell, Ramey, Grace, Timraz, & Davis, 2011; Sandefur et al., 2010) was not explicitly mentioned by the participants of the study. However, participants in both center talked about the "supervisors", a position created by the institutions to support the centers' staff in a broad range of issues including the identification and solving of problems, effective implementation of curriculum, and fulfillment of institutional goals. Apparently, supervisors assigned by the institution to support centers can and to some extent are expected to play the role of coaches for centers' staff. But the nature of supervisors' role makes it difficult for them to truly serve as a coach because part of their responsibilities is to supervise centers' activities and serve as a bridge between the centers and central departments at the institutions. In other words, supervisors are accountable to the institution about staff's progress and this might prevent some members of the staff to freely express their concerns and difficulties related to their tasks if they feel the supervisor will be evaluating them instead of providing support.

5.2.2 Theme 2: perceptions about the value and effectiveness of professional development activities

Participants in this study unanimously agreed in considering PD a key element in the advancement of their professional careers which is supported by much of the literature on early

childhood PD. In terms of the effectiveness of PD, with the exception of one center's director, the majority of participants in this study reported that PD activities had an impact in their practices and children at their care. This is consistent with several studies that found improvement in educator's knowledge and practices after PD implementation, usually using a variety of PD activities (Campbell & Milbourne, 2005; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008; Sandefur, Warren, Gamble, Holcombe, & Hicks, 2010; van Keulen, 2010). It is important to note though, that most of those studies used standardized instruments to measure teachers and classrooms performance in order to determine the impact of PD activities while educators' perceptions regarding PD activities were not explored. In this regard, the present study provides a complement to previous studies on the subject, contributing to expand the knowledge available regarding the PD of early childhood educators. The inclusion of educator's perspectives on a topic that directly concern them is particularly relevant in the Chilean context, where early childhood educators' voices have been historically underrepresented in research and their opinions have often been absent in public debates concerning teachers' training and careers.

One center director in this study reported not benefitting from PD activities, in particular from ongoing training guided by experts internal to the institution. Her perception regarding PD effectiveness was almost opposite to her colleague at Mawida center, who said she felt lucky to have the benefit of being constantly trained by the institution. The disagreement in directors' perspectives could be explained by the fact that they had different degrees of expertise and were at very different moments of their professional careers. The director of El Roble center had a long career path compared with her colleague at Mawida center and it might be possible that what was helpful for her younger colleague in terms of PD was not longer useful for her. This

explanation raises the question about what is appropriate in terms of PD activities for educators at different stages of their professional trajectory. Alternatively, differences in director's perspectives might indicate factual differences in the quality of PD available to them.

5.2.3 Theme 3: professional development needs

Several significant needs were identified by participants regarding their PD. Even though in general participants recognized that PD activities available at their centers were useful to them, they pointed out that often the dosage was not enough to really delve into a topic or develop new skills. For instance, they commented that orientations sessions and courses on specific topics of their interest were helpful but they were often sub utilized activities because of their superficiality. This finding suggests that the amount of a particular PD activity might be as important as the type of activity or the topic addressed at it, which is consistent with what have been found by Ramey et al. (2011) in terms of the importance of giving careful consideration to dosage when implementing PD.

Participants at both centers identified a need to receive more training from professionals with a greater level of specialization and expertise in the subject matters they taught. An important difference between the two centers was that the staff at El Roble center already had opportunities to attend workshops and courses guided by experts, although most of these experts were from inside the institution. Participants thought they could benefit more from PD activities if they were given by external experts who were considered to have a greater level of specialization. On the other hand, in Mawida center it was the director who had greater chances to receive training guided by experts, while educators had only occasional access to training directed by experts because most of the PD activities in which they participated were guided by the center's director. Therefore, when educators at Mawida center talked about their need for

more specialized training, they referred to any kind of experts in the subject matter, whether from inside or outside the institution. The distinction between the centers in terms of the reported need for more specialized training is important because it shows that specialization of trainers involves a degree level that is perceived and compared by participants to the extent that they have participated in PD activities guided by professionals with different levels of expertise. Therefore, It could be hypothesized that, because educators at El Roble center had more possibilities to be in contact with different types of experts (internal and external to the institution), they were able to specifically point out that it was more external experts in charge of PD activities what they needed, not more PD activities with experts from the institutional central department.

Participants at El Roble center expressed a need for access to ongoing training activities for a greater number of educators. Even though attendance to ongoing training activities was considered beneficial by educators, there was a concern about the difficulty to train the teams simultaneously. Usually one or two educators attended a course or workshop outside the center at a time. However many of the trainings' contents were meant to be applied by a team and not by an isolated educator. Once an educator is back from a PD ongoing activity, she often finds there is no time to share what she learned, neither with her colleagues in charge of other classrooms nor with the technicians working in her own classroom. This raises a practical issue for PD implementation related to who should attend PD activities and whether training teams instead of individuals can influence the impact of PD activities.

Based on the frequency reported, the most important topics identified by participants at both centers as a PD need were language and socioemotional development. The identification of these topics as areas that need to be addressed in PD activities is coherent not only with part of

the basic abilities the country has agreed educators should master but also with the poor results obtained by early childhood educators in “Prueba Inicia”, a national test that measures pedagogic and disciplinary knowledge of recently graduated educators, including language and socioemotional knowledge. The identification of language and socioemotional development as areas to strengthen in PD activities is even more important when considering that participants at the centers approached work with a socially disadvantaged population in which children have historically performed poorer in all areas of development when compared to children who were not in social disadvantage. As has been stated by Pianta (2006) PD plays an especially important role for early childhood educators serving socially vulnerable children because they work in complex social environments that often demand the adoption of new practices that help them to respond to the educational needs of the children and families they work with.

The improvement of the initial training of early childhood educators was one of the PD needs reported by participants at El Roble center. Even though the initial training of educators did not appear directly related with the PD of participants, they pointed out two important connections. First, due to the large professional experience of participants, they were able to compare the initial training of new educators over time, agreeing that the training of early childhood educators had increasingly deteriorated. In their view, new early childhood educators have a poor foundation in terms of their training, which negatively affects the benefit they can have from PD activities because they become purely remedial. Instead of building new knowledge and abilities from an already sound foundation, PD activities are used by new educators as an opportunity to learn things they should have learnt at their initial training. Second, participants said that poor initial training of educators negatively affected their own professional advancement because they had to spend time and energy supporting new educators

in the performance of tasks they should know instead of developing partnerships that could be of mutual support in terms of the improvement of pedagogical practices. It was interesting to the researcher the fact that this finding was only identified in El Roble center. One possible interpretation is that Fundación Integra, the institution to which Mawida center belongs, has historically have a proportionally larger number of technicians in the centers' staff compared with JUNJI, the institution to which El Roble center belongs. Therefore it might be that the expectations in terms of staff's training in general are lower. An alternative explanation could be that participants at Mawida center had notably less years of experience than participants at El Roble center. Thus, having had fewer opportunities to observe and compare the training of their new colleagues, the quality of the initial training of new educators did not appear as an issue for participants at Mawida center.

Findings from El Roble center showing participant's perceptions about the need to strengthen the initial training of early childhood educators confirms what several researchers in the country have suggested as a critical step for the improvement of early childhood education (García Huidobro, 2006; Rojas et al., 2008; UNICEF, 2001). These findings also reinforce the direction taken by the incipient efforts the country has done to improve educators' training, which begun with the creation of the "National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programs" to guide institutions in charge of educators' initial training (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

5.2.4 Theme 4: working conditions

Participants at El Roble center expressed their dissatisfaction with certain working conditions such as lack of time, increasing administrative work, low staff-child ratio and low wages. In fact, the center staff was on strike asking for better working conditions the first time

the researcher visited the center to conduct the interviews. Participants viewed unfavorable working conditions as a hindrance for their PD and overall performance as early childhood educators. It is worth noting that participants were not directly asked about their working conditions, therefore to some extent it constitutes an unexpected finding of the study that might have been influenced by the institutional strike in which the center was involved at the time of the interviews. However, the reality of poor working conditions in early childhood education is neither new, nor local. The finding reinforces the voices claiming for better working conditions for early childhood educators both internationally (Barnett, 2003; OECD, 2012) and in Chile (García- Huidobro, 2006; Rojas et al., 2008).

The issue of unsatisfactory working conditions raised by participants at El Roble center is significant because it reveals that early childhood educators' performance is not only dependent of initial training and PD activities. There are broader contextual factors that have to be taken into account when analyzing educators' practices, being their working conditions one of them. For instance, without enough time as a resource, it is difficult to think of an adequate performance of routine tasks, let alone an effective process of PD implementation. As the center's director described it, lack of time "works against your entire job". If low staff-ratio and increasing administrative tasks are added to the already scarce time, then time available for educative purposes become threatened as well as educators' level of satisfaction with their jobs because they might feel they are not doing what they have studied for, that is to educate children. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine if low wages are the cause or the result of the low status of the early childhood profession. However the low wages of educators are certainly a potent message of society's valuation of early childhood education. While it is true that early childhood education has gained increasing attention and funding over the years, it is also true that there is

still a big gap between the official discourse of early childhood education relevance and the investment in those factors that make possible and adequate implementation of it. Better compensation of early childhood teachers is important not only to reduce the effort reward imbalance of educators already in the field, but also for hiring and retaining more effective educators, something that Chilean early childhood education desperately need.

The reason why the issue of working conditions was raised by participants at El Roble center while barely mentioned by participants at Mawida center could be found in an organizational disparity between the institutions to which both centers belong. JUNJI, the institution to which El Roble center belongs, have an older and much stronger union than Fundación Integra, which could have contributed to raising awareness of this issue among the staff. In fact, the center's director at El Roble center was very knowledgeable of the legislation about the workers' rights because she had acted as the union's leader of JUNJI for several years. As such, she was not only very sensitive about her team's struggles on working conditions but also diligent in fostering awareness of this issue among the staff at her center.

5.3 Recommendations for the Improvement of Early Childhood Professional Development in State-Funded Chilean Institutions

5.3.1 Recommendations for institutions offering initial training for early childhood educators

Early childhood educators should become familiar with the meaning and relevance of their long life PD during their initial training. Universities and institutes offering initial training can play an important role in informing and fostering debate about the different dimensions of educators' PD. This includes developing a culture among educators that recognize and value non formal types of PD, especially those that involve reflection of their own practices among

colleagues. For example, students would benefit from learning in their initial training that learning communities are an important part of their future PD because by sharing and creating knowledge with more experienced colleagues they can assure continuity to their learning processes. Learning communities are a powerful type of PD because the exchange among peers, identification of shared problems and jointed creation of solutions provide an avenue for learning that cannot be replaced by other types of PD.

Universities and institutions can also help to improve the lifelong PD of early childhood educators by improving the initial training they impart. PD should not only be a means to “repair” the deficiencies of a week initial training, but include specialization of knowledge and skills that support educators’ interactions with children and their families. A stronger initial training in pedagogical and disciplinary areas would allow educators to take more benefit of their PD opportunities once they are part of the workforce.

5.3.2 Recommendations for professional development designers

Institutions providing early childhood education would benefit from taking greater advantage of the PD activities they already have. Orientation for instance could be expanded and strengthen by not been limited to introducing the institutional statute but also covering pedagogical topics that prepare new educators for their tasks with children and families. Ongoing training activities such as courses and workshops could be improved by having more leaders with a greater expertise in the subject matters they teach. These PD activities would also benefit by including follow up sessions that allow continuity through personal feedback and answers to questions that might have arisen while educators tried to apply in the classroom the new content learned in ongoing training activities.

In addition to maximize the benefits of PD activities already in place, PD designers at

institutions could consider to introduce coaching as a complementary form of PD, especially considering the good results of this type of PD research has found, in particular when it is combined with specialized training such as courses or workshops. For example, coaching might be useful to support new educators to become familiar with their work at the centers after the orientation process, or to help the entire staff to adopt new strategies or changes in the curriculum.

Furthermore, institutions should develop a design of PD that foster and protect PD activities, avoiding the threatening of their implementation by factors such as lack of time or excessive administrative work. In addition, in order to encourage professional advancement, institutions would benefit from creating a design for educators' careers that allow educators get promoted as they become more experienced without necessarily quitting teaching. Currently, there is no institutional recognition of educators' degrees of experience. Often when good educators are recognized by their performance, they are appointed for a higher position that almost always implies a leave from the classroom. Thus, as they acquire more expertise, virtually the only option available to advance their careers is to abandon their roles as educators. A possible solution to this would be designing a model for educators' careers that includes increasing levels of responsibilities and compensation as they progress at their work with children at the classroom level.

5.3.3 Recommendations for policymakers

There is no public policy for early childhood educators PD in Chile and therefore the most imperative suggestion for policymakers is to create one. In order to make that possible, the first step for policymakers is to be informed and become sensitive about the need and relevance of PD for early childhood educators. As a result of the understanding and full recognition of PD

as an important avenue to improve educators' training, policymakers should develop public policy that foster the PD of educators. In particular, educators would benefit from a law that regulates educators' careers. Such a law should encompass the different elements involved in educator's careers including working conditions, PD opportunities and a retirement plan.

Policymakers could also support the improvement of PD implementation for early childhood educators by assigning more financial resources to institutions providing early childhood education. Most of the elements that would improve PD implementation such as more training guided by experts, more time assigned to PD, access to PD for a greater number of educators, and improvement of working conditions are dependent of financial resources. However, budget is not at the hands of institutions and even though they might have the intention and need to invest in PD, they are often limited by scarce financial resources.

5.4 Limitations and Strengths of the Present Study

5.4.1 Limitations

This study is limited in that it is a small sample of educators and may not be representative of all educators working at state-funded early childhood centers in Chile. Due to limited resources available for this study, the sample did not include participants working in rural areas or in regions outside the capital.

The present study did not include technicians¹⁰ as part of the sample. This is a limitation of this study because technicians are a large part of the center's staff and are often the people who spend the greatest amount of time with children at the classroom. Technicians were not

¹⁰ Technicians are professionals in charge of assisting early childhood educators in the classroom. Technicians usually hold a 2 year certificate conferred by a technical center, professional institute or a university.

included in this study precisely because their professional development constitutes an important and unresolved issue that should be studied in a separate investigation. The present study focused in early childhood educators, with the aim to contribute to the country's already public debate about their training. Technicians' training is a topic that the country has not started to discuss, but it will most likely be one of the next steps in the debate about the improvement of early childhood education.

5.4.2 Strengths

This study had numerous strengths. The study fulfilled its purpose in terms of generating preliminary evidence that contributes to a better understanding of the state of early childhood professional development in Chile. Deploying a qualitative method of interviewing provided a rich and in depth perspective on educators' experiences about their professional development. This brought to life and made visible educator's opinions and perspectives, which have been rarely considered in early childhood education research in Chile. By addressing the topic of early childhood PD, this study has the potential to raise awareness of and contribute to the problem of early childhood educators' training, a topic that needs to gain attention in the current debate about teachers' career in Chile.

There are no previous studies investigating PD implementation in early childhood education in the country and therefore, this study is the first of its kind. In this regard, the study has the potential to open a new trend of research focused in early childhood PD, becoming the starting point of future studies that might and should include different methodologies. One of the main contributions of this study is the increment of an incipient corpus of research in early childhood education in Chile, in particular serving as a complement to studies on the initial training of early childhood educators.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

Future research on early childhood PD in Chile should involve studies with a larger and more diverse sample. Ideally, those studies should incorporate in their samples the staff of centers located in rural areas as well as regions of the country other than the capital. In addition to educators employed at early childhood educational centers, more comprehensive samples should also include early childhood educators working at state-funded schools.

In terms of methodology, future research on PD would benefit from employing ethnographies. Ethnographic studies on the PD of early childhood educators would provide the possibility to observe the implementation of PD activities directly and therefore they would be an excellent complement to findings from studies employing other methodologies.

Taking into account the absence of studies on this topic, the purpose of the present study was to provide preliminary information about the state of PD according to early childhood centers' staff in Chile. However, in order to gain greater understanding of the multiple factors affecting PD implementation, studies focusing in more specific aspects of PD should follow the present study. For instance, it would be useful to have studies measuring the impact of different types of PD activities in the classroom and children learning, or studies investigating the PD needs of early childhood educators in different moments of their professional careers.

Lastly, considering the important role and the large amount of time that technicians spend taking care of children in early childhood educational centers, future research should begin to explore the state and future plan of technicians' professional development.

5.6 Conclusions

This study explored the knowledge, experiences and needs regarding PD from the perspective of the staff employed at two centers providing state-funded early childhood

education in Chile. Participants described a variety of PD activities such as orientation; beginning of the year training; ongoing training in the form of workshops, courses and conferences; learning communities; and diplomas and degrees. Some of these PD activities were common to both of the centers approached and others were unique to each center. Taken together, the types of PD described by participants in this study are consistent with much of the literature on the subject.

Participants in this study perceived PD as critical component of their professional careers but indicated several needs that should be met in order to improve its effectiveness. PD needs identified by participants included access to ongoing training activities for a greater number of educators; greater duration and depth in orientation sessions and ongoing training activities; more opportunities to receive training guided by experts; more training focused in topics related to language development, socioemotional development, and assessment; greater economic support and incentive to pursue postgraduate studies; improvement of the initial training of early childhood educators; and improvement of working conditions. Most of these needs were common to both centers approached while the last two were reported only by participants at El Roble center. Due to the absence of previous studies exploring PD needs from educators' perspectives, the PD needs expressed by participants in this study constitute an original contribution to the research in the field. However, much of the PD needs reported by participants are related and/ or confirm several broader issues that have been and continue to be debated in the early childhood education arena. Some of those issues are financial funding for early childhood education, quality of the initial training of early childhood educators, and working conditions at early childhood educational centers.

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Appendices

Appendix A Cover Letter to Institutions

October 25, 2013

Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles
Marchant Pereira 726. Providencia, Santiago

To the National Department,

We are writing to request institutional approval to conduct a UBC study in one early childhood educational center of Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles. The study is entitled “Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education: What do Educators Have to Say?” and corresponds to a thesis project being conducted by one of our MA students, Mariel Gomez, as part of a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education. Briefly, the research is being conducted with educators and directors employed at centers offering public early childhood education and explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development in Chile. A fuller description/summary of the study is attached for your review, along with the following documents:

- Letter of initial contact for the center’s director.
- Consent form for the center’s director
- Letter of initial contact for the educators
- Consent form for the educators

If you would like to learn more about the study or have any further questions, please feel free to contact us by email or telephone (listed below).

Laurie Ford, PhD
Principal Investigator
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
XXXXXX@XXX.XX

Mariel Gomez
Co-Investigator
Phone: XXXXXXXX (Chile)
(XXX) XXX-XXXX (Canada)
XXX@XXXX.XXX.XX

October 25, 2013

Fundación Integra
Alonso Ovalle 1180. Santiago, Chile.

To the National Department,

We are writing to request institutional approval to conduct a UBC study in one early childhood educational center of Fundación Integra foundation. The study is entitled “Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education: What do Educators Have to Say?” and corresponds to a thesis project being conducted by one of our MA students, Mariel Gomez, as part of a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education. Briefly, the research is being conducted with educators and directors employed at centers offering public early childhood education and explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development in Chile. A fuller description/summary of the study is attached for your review, along with the following documents:

- Letter of initial contact for the center’s director
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- Letter of initial contact for the educators
- Consent for the educators

If you would like to learn more about the study or have any further questions, please feel free to contact us by email or telephone (listed below).

Laurie Ford, PhD
Principal Investigator
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
XXXXXX@XXX.XX

Mariel Gomez
Co-Investigator
Phone: XXXXXXXX (Chile)
(XXX) XXX-XXXX (Canada)
XXX@XXXX.XXX.XX

Appendix B Letter of initial Contact for Center Director

Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education:

What Do Educators Have to Say?

Letter of Initial Contact for Center Director

Principal Investigator:	Laurie Ford, Ph.D. Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education University of British Columbia Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX	Email: XXXXX@XXX.XX
Co-Investigator:	Maríel Gomez, M.A. Student Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry University of British Columbia Phone: XXXXXX	Email: XXXXXX@XXX.XXX.XX

Dear _____ (insert name),

Your name has been given to us by _____ (name of person contacted at the Institution's administration). We are writing to invite you to be part of a research study investigating professional development in the context of Chilean public early childhood education. Your contribution is very important to our understanding of early childhood professional development in Chile, specifically, how it is experienced by early childhood educators. This letter is intended to introduce you to the study and to describe what it means to take part.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the state of early childhood professional development in Chile. Professional development in early childhood education has been identified as one of the main avenues to ensure teacher education quality, thus positively influencing the potential benefit children can obtain from early education. However, in Chile there is a scarcity of studies on early childhood professional development that can inform future efforts to improve this critical aspect of teacher's preparation. In this study we want to explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development from the perspective of early childhood teachers currently in the workforce in Chile. In particular, we will focus on the knowledge, experience, and needs regarding professional development opportunities of the staff employed in institutions that provide public early childhood education in Chile. It is anticipated that the results of this study will help us better understand the state of early childhood professional development in

Chile, supporting the country's efforts on improving the preparation of early childhood educators.

What is involved if we take part in the study?

The research study involves one-to-one interviews with the center's director and two early childhood educators at the center. The interviews will take about an hour to complete. The interviews will be conducted at the center on dates and at times agreed upon by the director, the educators and the researcher. If everyone agrees, there might be a follow up interview to expand on or clarify information from the first interview. With participants' permission, the interview(s) will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants' identity will remain confidential, but excerpts and/or direct quotes from the interview(s) may be used anonymously in Ms. Gomez' thesis. If requested, a summary of the results will be sent to the participants once the study is completed.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in our study, you will be asked:

- to participate in a one-on-one interview about your experiences with early childhood professional development.
- to distribute a letter of initial contact and consent form to educators at your center to inform them about the study and to request their participation in the study.
- to allow selected educators and interested in study participation to take part in the study.
- to work collaboratively with the educators taking part in the study and the researcher to arrange the most convenient date and time to conduct the interviews.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project and/or interview at any time. For more details, please review the attached consent form. If you are willing to participate, please reply to this email or contact Mariel Gomez by the phone number or email listed at the beginning of this letter. If we have not heard from you in the next 7 days, we will send you an email reminder encouraging you to respond to our request.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this project please contact Mariel Gomez by email or telephone (listed above). We hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Laurie Ford, PhD
Associate Professor
Principal Investigator

Mariel Gomez
M.A. Student in Early Childhood Education
Co-Investigator

Appendix C Letter of Initial Contact for Educators

Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education:

What Do Educators Have to Say?

Letter of Initial Contact for Educators

Principal Investigator:	Laurie Ford, Ph.D. Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education University of British Columbia Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX Email: XXXXX@XXX.XX
Co-Investigator:	Mariel Gomez, M.A. Student Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry University of British Columbia Phone: XXXXXX Email XXXXX@XXX.XXX.XX

Dear _____ (insert name),

Your name has been given to me by _____ (insert name of center’s director). We are writing to invite you to be part of a research study investigating professional development in the context of Chilean public early childhood education. Your contribution is very important to our understanding of early childhood professional development in Chile, specifically, how it is experienced by early childhood educators. This letter is intended to introduce you to the study and to describe what it means to take part.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the state of early childhood professional development in Chile. Professional development in early childhood education has been identified as one of the main avenues to ensure teacher education quality, thus positively influencing the potential benefit children can obtain from early education. However, in Chile there is a scarcity of studies on early childhood professional development that can inform future efforts to improve this critical aspect of teacher’s preparation. In this study we want to explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development from the perspective of early childhood teachers currently in the workforce in Chile. In particular, we will focus on the knowledge, experience, and needs regarding professional development opportunities of the staff employed in institutions that provide public early childhood education in Chile. It is anticipated that the results of this study will help us better understand the state of early childhood professional development in Chile, supporting the country’s efforts on improving the preparation of early childhood educators.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in our study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview about your experience with early childhood professional development. The interviews will take about an hour to complete and will be conducted at the center on dates and at times agreed upon by the director, you, and the researcher. Based on mutual agreement, there might be a follow up interview to expand upon or clarify information from the first interview. If you agree, the interview(s) will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Your identity will remain confidential, but excerpts and/or direct quotes from the interview(s) may be used anonymously in the results chapter of Ms. Gomez thesis. If requested, a copy of the results of the study will be sent to participants once the study is completed.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw from the project and/or interview at any time. For more details, please review the attached consent form. If you would like to learn more about the study or are interested in participation, please contact Mariel Gomez by email or phone listed at the beginning of this letter. If we have not heard from you in the next 7 days, we will send you a letter reminder encouraging you to respond to our request.

If you have any questions or desire further information about this project please feel free to contact Mariel Gomez by email or telephone (listed above). We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Laurie Ford, PhD
Associate Professor
Principal Investigator

Mariel Gomez
M.A. Student in Early Childhood Education
Co-Investigator

Appendix D Study Summary

Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education: What Do Educators Have to Say?

Principal Investigator: Laurie Ford, PhD, Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia
Email: XXXXXX@XXX.XX
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Co-Investigator: Mariel Gomez, Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry
Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia
Email: X.XXXX@XXXXX.XXX.XX
Phone: XXXXXXXX (Chile) / (XXX) XXX-XXXX (Canada)

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to investigate early childhood professional development in Chile. Initial teacher preparation and professional development in early childhood education are important avenues to ensure quality teacher education. Quality teachers maximize the benefits children gain from early education. Professional development provides existing early childhood educators with knowledge, skills, and abilities that they may not have or acquired in preservice programs but are important in performing their job. In addition, professional development has the potential to help teachers' update their skills and knowledge. This is especially important in early childhood education, where new programs are being developed and our knowledge of what constitutes best practices is growing fast and steady.

In Chile, concern has been expressed regarding the gap between early childhood educators training and the challenges they face once in the workforce. Studies and initiatives to improve early childhood teacher education's quality have focused mostly in their pre-service preparation, whereas little or no attention has been paid to professional development, despite the importance of professional development to quality early childhood education. Acknowledging the need for more research on professional development, the aim of this study is to make a contribution to the current understanding of the state of early childhood professional development in Chile.

What are the research questions?

We will explore the following research questions in our study:

- What do educators and administrators know about their institution's policies regarding professional development?
- In relation to professional development activities experienced by educators and administrators:
 - How do educators and administrators describe the implementation of professional development activities they have participated in?
 - How do educators and administrators regard the effectiveness of professional development activities they have participated in?

- What do educators and administrators perceive as their professional development needs?

Who do we hope will take part in the study?

We are looking for four early childhood educators and two directors employed at two centers that provide public early childhood education in Chile to take part in the study.

What are the study methods and procedures?

We want to conduct our study at two centers providing public early childhood education in an urban area of Santiago, Chile. At each center, the director and two early childhood educators (one educator attending children 0-3 years old and one educator attending children 3- 4 years, 11 months) will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview. The interviews questions will explore the participants' knowledge, experiences, and needs regarding professional development. The interviews will take about an hour to complete and will be conducted at the centers on dates and times that work best for the director, the educators and the researcher. If the participant agrees, there might be a follow up interview to expand upon or clarify information shared in the first interview. With participants' permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants' identity will remain confidential, but excerpts and/or direct quotes from the interview(s) may be used anonymously in the results chapter of Ms. Gomez thesis.

How will we recruit the participants?

A letter of initial contact along with a copy of consent form will be sent by email to center directors. For those center directors who indicate they want to take part in the study, letters of initial contact for educators and consent form will be sent by mail, so directors can distribute the letters to their educators. From those educators who would like to take part in the study, one educator working with children 0-3 years old and one educator working with children 3- 4 years, 11 months will be selected. If more than two eligible educators want to take part, priority will be given to those that have more years of service at the institution. The researcher will contact the directors and educators by phone to schedule the interviews and find dates and times that are less disruptive for centers' daily routine. For those directors and educators who agree to be interviewed a copy of the consent form will be reviewed again with the researcher the day of the interview before the interview begins, and signed on site.

What about our confidentiality?

Consistent with UBC research standards and Canadian ethical standards for research, data will be collected, managed, stored, and used in a manner that does not identified the people who take part in our study. All interview transcripts will be coded using identification numbers instead of names. All of the information we gather will be kept in a secure place.

Can we receive a copy of the findings?

If anyone who takes part in the project would like a copy of the results once the study is completed we are very happy to send a copy.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

If you want to know anything else about the study, please contact the co-investigator at the email or phone listed above.

Appendix E Consent Letter for Center Director

Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education: What Do Educators Have to Say? Consent Letter for Center Director

Principal Investigator: Laurie Ford, Ph.D.
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special
Education
University of British Columbia
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX Email: XXXX.XX@XXX.XX

Co-Investigator: Mariel Gomez, M.A. Student
Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry
University of British Columbia
Phone: XXXXXXXX Email: XXXXX@XXXXX.XXX.XX

Dear _____ (insert name),

Please read the following letter carefully. If after reading the letter, you would like to take part in the study, please sign one copy and give to the interviewer at the interview session. Keep the other copy for your own records. This letter is a request for your consent to take part in the study we are doing. This project is a part of a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of British Columbia for Ms. Gomez.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the state of early childhood professional development in Chile. Professional development in early childhood education has been identified as one of the main avenues to help ensure teacher education quality, and in turn influencing the benefit children obtain from early education. However, in Chile there are few studies on early childhood professional development that can inform future efforts to improve this important aspect of teacher's preparation. In our study we want to explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development from the perspective of early childhood teachers currently working in Chile.

Taking Part in our Study Means:

1. If you agree to take part in our study, you will participate in a one-on-one interview about your experiences with early childhood professional development.
2. The interview will take place at the center at a date and time that works for both you and the researcher. The interview will take about one hour.

3. The researcher will take notes and the conversation will be audio recorded if you give your consent to do so. The audio recording will be transcribed by the researcher after the interview.
4. Based on mutual agreement, there might be a follow up interview to expand or clarify points in the first interview.
5. The information gathered during the interview(s), including the interview notes and transcripts, will be used as data in Ms.Gomez's thesis. Your identity will remain confidential, but excerpts and/or direct quotes from the interview(s) may be used anonymously in the text of the thesis's results chapter.
6. Only the Principal Investigator (Dr. Laurie Ford) and the co-investigator (Mariel Gomez) will have access to the information gathered through the interview(s). Interview notes, interview transcripts, and audio recordings will be stored in password-protected computers and backed-up in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Ford's office at UBC.
7. Given the nature of the research and questions posed during the interview, it is not expected that you will experience significant discomfort during the process or risks as a result of your participation. Nonetheless, you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.
8. In addition to participating in a one-on-one interview, as the director of the center you will be asked to support the study by:
 - Informing educators at your center about the study and distributing to them a letter of initial contact that will be sent to you by the co-investigator.
 - Allowing selected educators who are interested to participate in the study.
 - Work collaboratively with selected educators and the co-investigator to arrange the most convenient dates and times to conduct the interviews.
9. If requested, you will receive a copy of the results of the project once it is completed.

Contact for information about the study:

- If you have any questions or desire further information about this project you may contact Dr Laurie Ford or Mariel Gomez at the email or phone number at the top of this page.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research participants:

- If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:

- Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this research project. When you sign below it also means that you have received a copy of this consent form (pages 1, 2 & 3) for your own records.

Please check one:

Yes, I consent to participate in this study and allow educators at my center to participate in this study if they provide consent.

No, I do not wish to and/or I do not wish to have educators at my center participate in this study.

IF YES:

Yes, I give my consent for the interview to be audio-recorded.

No, I do give my consent for the interview to be audio-recorded.

Director Name (Please Print)

Director Signature

Date

Appendix F Consent Letter for Educators

Professional Development in Chilean Public Early Childhood Education: What Do Educators Have to Say? Consent Letter for Educators

Principal Investigator: Laurie Ford, Ph.D.
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special
Education
University of British Columbia
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX Email: XXXX.XXX@XXX.XX

Co-Investigator: Mariel Gomez, M.A. Student
Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry
University of British Columbia
Phone: XXXXXXXX Email: X.XXXX@XXXX.XXX.XX

Dear _____ (insert name),

Please read the following letter carefully. If after reading the letter, you would like to take part in the study, please sign one copy and give to the interviewer at the interview session. Keep the other copy for your own records. This letter is a request for your consent to take part in the study we are doing. This project is a part of a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of British Columbia for Ms. Gomez.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the state of early childhood professional development in Chile. Professional development in early childhood education has been identified as one of the main avenues to help ensure teacher education quality, and in turn influencing the benefit children obtain from early education. However, in Chile there are few studies on early childhood professional development that can inform future efforts to improve this important aspect of teacher's preparation. In our study we want to explore the characteristics of early childhood professional development from the perspective of early childhood teachers currently working in Chile.

Taking Part in our Study Means:

- 1 If you agree to take part in our study, you will participate in a one-on-one interview about your experience in early childhood professional development.
- 2 The interview will take place at the center at a date and time that works for both you and the researcher. The interview will take about one hour.

- 3 The researcher will take notes and the conversation will be audio recorded if you give your consent to do so. The audio recording will be transcribed by the researcher after the interview.
- 4 Based on mutual agreement, there might be a follow up interview to expand or clarify points in the first interview.

- 5 The information gathered during the interview(s), including the interview notes and transcripts, will be used as data in Ms.Gomez's thesis. Your identity will remain confidential, but excerpts and/or direct quotes from the interview(s) may be used anonymously in the text of the thesis's results chapter.

- 6 Only the Principal Investigator (Dr. Laurie Ford) and the co-investigator (Mariel Gomez) will have access to the information gathered through the interview(s). Interview notes, interview transcripts, and audio recordings will be stored in password-protected computers and backed-up in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Ford's office at UBC.

- 7 Given the nature of the research and questions posed during the interview, it is not expected that you will experience significant discomfort during the process or risks as a result of your participation. Nonetheless, you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

- 8 If requested, you will receive a copy of the results of the project once it is completed.

Contact for information about the study:

- If you have any questions or desire further information about this project you may contact Dr Laurie Ford or Mariel Gomez at the email or phone number at the top of this page.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research participants:

- If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:

- Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this research project. When you sign below it also means that you have received a copy of this consent form (pages 1, 2 & 3) for your own records.

Please check one:

Yes, I consent to participate in this study.

No, I do not wish to participate in this study.

IF YES:

Yes, I authorize the interview to be audio-recorded.

No, I do not authorize the interview to be audio-recorded.

Educator Name (Please Print)

Educator Classroom Level

Educator Signature

Date

Appendix G Participants Background Information

The following questions were asked at the beginning of initial interview with the participants.

Background Information for Center Directors

Age:

How many years have you worked at this center?

How many years have you served as a director or administrator at this center?

How many years have you worked as an administrator or director of a program in Early Childhood Education?

How many years have you worked in Early Childhood Education all together?

What is your highest education degree?

In what area did you receive your highest educational degree?

If your highest educational degree is not in early childhood education, do you have a degree or some sort of formal education training in early childhood?

Background Information for Educators

Age:

How many years have you worked at this center?

How many years have you served as an educator at this center?

How many years have you worked as an educator in Early Childhood Education?

How many years have you worked in Early Childhood Education all together?

What is your highest education degree?

In what area did you receive your highest educational degree?

If your highest educational degree is not in early childhood education, do you have a degree or some sort of formal education training in early childhood?

Appendix H Center Director Interview Protocol

1. What kinds of PD opportunities are offered by JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
Follow up question: If interviewee says no opportunities are offered: Why do you think that happens?
2. Who is the target of PD activities in JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
 - 3.1. Describe the PD activities in which you have participated while working in JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
Follow up question: If interviewee says she has never participated in PD activities: Why do you think that is the case?
 - 3.2. Describe the PD activities in which educators at your center have participated while working in JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
Follow up question: If interviewee says educators have never participated in PD activities: Why do you think that is the case?
 - 4.1. What did you learn from the PD activities you have participated in?
 - 4.2. What do you think educators at your center have learned from the PD activities they have participated in?
 - 5.1. Describe the impact, if any, of the PD activities you have participated in on your daily work?
Follow up question: How is that impact related to the children and families you work with?
 - 5.2. Describe the impact, if any, of the PD activities undertaken by educators at your center on their daily work?
Follow up question: How is that impact related to the children and families educators work with?
6. Imagine you were given the opportunity to design activities that fulfill your PD needs. What would be the characteristics of those activities/ programs?
Follow up question: Which are the main topics you would include in PD activities? Why do you think it is important to include those topics?
7. How would you implement the PD activities you described?

Appendix I Educators Interview Protocol

1. What kinds of PD opportunities are offered by JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
Follow up question: If interviewee says no opportunities are offered: Why do you think that happens?
2. Who is the target of PD activities in JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
3. Describe the PD activities in which you have participated while working in JUNJI/ Fundación Integra foundation?
Follow up question: If interviewee says she has never participated in PD activities: Why do you think you have not been given the opportunity?
4. What did you learn from the PD activities you have participated in?
5. Describe the impact, if any, of the PD activities you have participated in on your daily work?
Follow up question: How are those impacts related to the children and families you work with?
6. Imagine you were given the opportunity to design activities that fulfill your PD needs. What would be the characteristics of those activities/ programs?
Follow up question: Which are the main topics you would include in PD activities? Why do you think it is important to include those topics?
7. How would you implement the PD activities you described?

Appendix J Translation of Citations

This appendix presents a side by side translation of all the interviews' cites included in Chapter Four. Cites are organized by themes and displayed in the same order they appeared in the text.

Theme 1: Different Types of professional Development

El Roble center

	Spanish	English Translation
1	La mayoría son capacitaciones básicas que replican otros funcionarios de la institución, llámese supervisoras, la mayoría. Hemos tenido cursos que se han implementado con otras instituciones como universidades, pero han sido los menos, y esos si son muy buenos, en calidad, en duración, que realmente te mejoran como profesional. (María)	Most of it [ongoing training] is basic training replicated by professionals from the institution called supervisors, most of it. We had had courses implemented by other institutions such as universities, but those have been the minority, and those are very good in terms of quality, duration, which really improves you as a professional. (María)
2	Hay capacitaciones que te da la institución que son dadas por supervisoras de la misma institución ¿Ya? Que es como, no es la persona, a lo mejor, idónea para realizarla. Porque, si es algo para el desarrollo del niño, lo mejor es que sea hecho por un psicólogo. A eso voy. (Marta)	There are training activities which are guided by supervisors from the institution. Ok? It is like... it is maybe not the suitable person to do it, because if it is something for children's development, the best thing would be that it was done by a psychologist. That's what I mean. (Marta)
4	Actualmente hay un departamento de inducción que a través de un video que hablan del estatuto administrativo muy someramente en una mañana entera, o tres, cuatro horas. A las personas nuevas se les informa qué se hace en la institución a grandes rasgos, entonces ¿Qué es lo que ellos hablan?, que la directora debiera hacer inducción a una educadora que llega nueva... pero es muy difícil... porque el trabajo nuestro es muy dinámico, nosotros nos proponemos metas a principio de año que tenemos que cumplir a finales de año en el trabajo con nuestros niños y niñas. Entonces, tú no puedes parar el trabajo para poder enseñar a una persona en determinado grupo de niños, porque ese grupo de niños tiene que seguir, seguir, seguir. (María)	Currently, there is a department in charge of orientation. They display a general video and talk about the administrative statute during an entire morning or three or four hours. The new people are informed about what is done at the institution in general terms, and then, what do they say? They say that the director should give an orientation to new educators ... but it is very difficult... because our job is very dynamic. At the beginning of the year we set goals related to the work with our children that we have to accomplish by the end of the year. Therefore you can't stop the work in order to teach a new person in a particular group of children because that group of children has to keep going, keep going, keep going. (María)
5	“Las comunidades de aprendizaje son parte de la formación continua de los funcionarios, y a	“Learning communities are part of the staff's continuing education and, differently from the

- diferencia de las capacitaciones, estos son una reflexión de nuestras propias prácticas” (María).
- 5 “Nunca podemos contar con toda la gente, generalmente son seis técnicas menos que quedan”(María).
- 7 Y, esta otra práctica de la formación continua, en las CAUE, yo considero que es más fructífera porque tu estas analizando tu propio quehacer, y además es más significativo para la persona el construir desde tu propio conocimiento...porque cuando tu llegas a una capacitación no siempre se parte desde ahí... en cambio acá es una construcción desde tu propio saber. (María)
- 8 La gente tiene que estar preparada, porque en las comunidades de aprendizaje tú de repente te encuentras con la colega que esta, y con la otra que sale, y no vuelve hasta no sé cuánto rato... claro, porque nosotras estamos acostumbradas a la reunión técnica, estructurada, con información... pero no estamos acostumbradas, por ejemplo, a analizar algo nuestro desde nuestro propio acervo... estamos acostumbrados a que nos entreguen conocimiento porque además fuimos educadas en instituciones que nos transmitieron conocimiento, entonces estamos acostumbradas a que alguien nos transmita conocimiento. (María)
- 9 Entrevistadora (EO) ¿Por qué será que cuando yo he entrevistado a gente del ámbito, sobre el desarrollo profesional, conversamos de distintas instancias, nadie me nombra las comunidades de aprendizaje? Pero después cuando yo voy a los documentos de la institución veo que es parte, pero nadie me los nombra.
Entrevistada (EA) Yo creo que porque se le da mayor valor agregado a la adquisición de conocimientos como transmisión.
EO Como que eso es más visto como capacitación.
EA Claro, como una persona que domina el tema... el hecho de que reflexionemos partió desde que llego la democracia, en que empezamos a trabajar los grupos de mujeres, de agrupaciones, y desde su propio conocimiento ongoing training, they are a reflection of our own practices” (María).
“We are never able to have all the people, generally there are six technicians less”(María).
- I consider the CAUE [learning community of the educative unit] a more productive continuing education practice because you are analyzing your own work, and also because to construct from your own knowledge is more meaningful for the person... in the CAUE there is a construction from your own knowledge, which is not always the starting point when you go to other types of training. (María)
- People have to be ready because during the learning communities’ meetings you sometimes find colleagues coming in and out of the room... yes, because we are used to the technical meeting, structured, with information... but we are not used, for instance, to analyze something from our own heritage...we are used to be given knowledge because we were educated in institutions that transmitted knowledge to us, so we are used to receive knowledge from someone. (María)
- Interviewer (IR) Why is it that when I have asked people about PD nobody talked about communities of learning? But then, when I read the institutional documents I realized that is part of it, but nobody talked to me about that.
Interviewee (IE) I believe it is because acquiring knowledge through transmission is more valued.
IR As if that were considered more like training...
IE Right, like a person who masters the topic... the fact of us reflecting began since democracy came back, when groups of women started to work together and from their own knowledge began to build greater knowledge. You see?... and in this country, professionally speaking, I feel there is a lot of work to do in

empezamos a construir mayores conocimientos, ¿te fijas?... y en este país, profesionalmente hablando yo siento que nos falta mucho para ser nosotros agentes de la construcción de nuestro propio conocimiento, de hecho no toda la gente investiga, busca, se perfecciona, se auto perfecciona, sino te lo entregan, no te perfeccionas. Si no vas a un curso que te imparte un organismo, no te sientes capacitada.(María)

the sense of ourselves being agents in the construction of our own knowledge. In fact, not everybody investigates, searches, and improves herself by their own initiative. If somebody does not give it to you [knowledge], you do not improve. If you do not take a course taught by an organization, you do not feel trained. (María)

Mawida center

Spanish

English Translation

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <p>En ciertas ocasiones las educadoras salen a capacitarse pero son las menos veces. Generalmente son las directoras las capacitadas y la directora es la que hace la transferencia en jornada de capacitación a sus equipos...esto es como una cascada para mi gusto, yo me tengo que empapar y apropiar del tema para transferirle a mi equipo de educadoras, y para que mis educadoras también puedan hacer el trabajo que corresponde en sala, con los niños, orientando a la tía. (Mónica)</p> | <p>In certain occasions educators go out [outside the center] for training but it is infrequent. Generally, is the director who attends the trainings and she “transfers” what she learned to her team during the ongoing training sessions... from my point of view this is like a cascade, I have to absorb and master the topic in order to transfer it to my team of educators, and also in order to allow my educators to do their job with the children and guide the technicians in their classrooms. (Mónica)</p> |
| 2 | <p>Son temas pertinentes a los cambios también que está sufriendo la educación parvularia, en cuanto a política, en cuanto a institución, en este caso la institución capacita en esos temas, por ejemplo el enfoque de derecho, el bienestar, el trabajo con familia, o cosas que por ejemplo va incorporando la institución, ellos capacitan. (Victoria)</p> | <p>These are topics corresponding to the changes going on in the field of early childhood education, related to policies, related to the institution, in this case the institution trains in those topics, for instance the children’s rights approach, wellbeing, the work with families, or things that the institution incorporates, they [the institution] train us about it. (Victoria)</p> |
| 3 | <p>En su mayoría son educadoras de párvulo... ellas han hecho postgrado, han ido avanzando también en su perfeccionamiento, y partieron siendo algunas educadoras o directoras, y hoy día son jefaturas del departamento... tienen como carrera en la fundación y ellas son quienes preparan las jornadas, en coordinación con casa central, porque de ahí viene todo, ahí hay un departamento especial que ve todas las temáticas a abordar en el año....” (Mónica)</p> | <p>Most of them are early childhood educators...they have done postgraduate studies, they have advanced in their improvement, and some of them began as educators or directors, and today they are leaders of the department...they have like a career in the foundation and they are who prepare the training sessions, jointly with the central department, because everything comes from there, there is a special department that determines all the topics to be addressed during the year...” (Mónica).</p> |
| 4 | <p>“nos dan la posibilidad de estudiar, ya sea diplomado, o algún grado, o alguna licenciatura</p> | <p>“they [the institution] give us the opportunity to study, whether it is a diploma or a degree, or if</p> |

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| | o si quieres especializarte de fonoaudióloga, etc.... ellos te dan un porcentaje, en este caso, para que tú canceles menos en tus estudios” (Victoria). | you want you can specialize as a speech therapist, etc... they support you with a percentage, in this case, so you pay less for your studies” (Victoria). |
| 5 | “la agente educativa es diferente, ellas tienen la posibilidad de estudiar educación parvularia y les cancelan el 100%, pero en algunas universidades” (Victoria). | “technicians are different, they have the possibility to study early childhood education and they are paid 100%, but only in some universities” (Victoria). |
| 6 | “yo entraba a las siete [pm], y salía a las once, u once y media, del instituto” (Carla). | “I arrived [daily] at the institute at seven [pm] and left at eleven or eleven thirty” (Carla). |

Theme 2: Perceptions About the Value and Effectiveness of Professional Development Activities

El Roble center

- | | Spanish | English Translation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | “Es una necesidad imperiosa para el desarrollo de los niños que nosotras estemos perfeccionándonos continuamente” (María) | “The fact that we are continuously improving is an imperative need for children’s development” (María). |
| 2 | “nuevas formas de trabajar, principalmente en relación a los cambios, a qué se le está dando más importancia ahora, en relación a antes; nuevas formas de evaluar; planificar; de recoger los conocimientos de los niños... te ayuda a ver las cosas de otra manera y a lo mejor, transmitirlo de otra manera, que tiene mejor llegada con ellos” (Marta). | “new ways of working, mainly related to changes, to what is relevant today compared with before, new ways to evaluate, to plan, to understand children’s knowledge... it helps you to see things differently, and maybe transmit it [knowledge] in others ways that are better for them [the children]” (Marta). |
| 3 | “he aprendido a detectar. Con ambos, con el curso de necesidades educativas especiales y con el diplomado de buen trato, adquirí herramientas para detectar” (Eliana). | “I have learned to detect. With both the course on special educational needs and the good treatment diploma, I acquired tools to detect” (Eliana) |
| 4 | “Honestamente, y siempre lo he reconocido, no es mucho lo que he aprendido en la institución con capacitación” | “Honestly, and I have always acknowledged it, I have not learned too much with training at the institution” (María). |
| 5 | Generalmente las capacitaciones que da la institución, yo creo que por un problema de dinero, son muy cortas, son muy breves, no solo para mí, yo casi no voy a capacitación, ósea excepto las estrictamente necesarias, porque considero que es una pérdida de tiempo, creo que es más provechosos estar acá, prefiero que me manden los power point y adquiero los conocimientos... yo soy más necesaria en mi jardín, corriendo para acá, corriendo para allá, que todo marche ok. (María) | Usually, the training giving by the institution, and I think it’s is due to a money shortage, is very short, very brief, not only for me. I almost don’t go to training, except when it is strictly necessary, because I consider that it is a waste of time, I believe it is more productive to stay here [at the center], I prefer to be sent a power point presentations to get the knowledge... I am more needed her in my center, running here and there, making sure everything works ok. (María) |

Mawida center

Spanish

English Translation

- 1 La formación aparte de lo que yo recibí cuando estudié, ha sido aquí en la fundación. Para mi es súper potente, porque no en todos lados esto se da, que constantemente te estén capacitando, te estén entregando insumos, nuevos contenidos... nosotros todos los años vamos avanzando y vamos adquiriendo nuevo conocimiento, incorporando nuevas temáticas, y eso impacta claramente en el aprendizaje de los niños. (Mónica)
 - 2 La institución me ha actualizado en los temas pertinentes de la actualidad. Por ejemplo en cuanto a las bases curriculares, en cómo aprenden los niños, nuevas teorías de aprendizaje. El niño de hoy va cambiando... entonces ya yo, en este caso, puedo decir que me he ido adecuando al niño de hoy con conocimientos... logro mejores aprendizajes de ellos... el trabajo con familia también ha sido muy favorecido con esto de actualizarme, en términos como de saber responder a todas las inquietudes de la familia. Eso. Y también, como te digo, en el hecho del trabajo con la agente educativa, porque no es solo yo la que trabajo con los niños... porque también se trabajan relaciones personales, que eso igual ha favorecido, y en eso también noto mi desarrollo como profesional. (Victoria)
 - 3 “Sí, el apoyo mucho de la directora, en cuanto a dudas de lo que nos estaban pasando, las materias y todas esas cosas” (Carla).
 - 4 “El departamento educativo, y el staff de supervisión, ellos hacen esfuerzos altos por hacer buenas jornadas de capacitación, no es ir a perder el tiempo” (Mónica).
 - 5 Es otra alternativa que tenemos acá, que vamos haciendo carrera. Tú no te quedas solamente con tu cargo inicial, sino que puedes ir avanzando. Por ejemplo yo partí como educadora, hoy día soy directora, el día de mañana si se dan las
- Besides what I learned when I was studying at the university, the training for me has happened here at the foundation. It is very powerful for me, because, the fact that you are constantly being trained does not happen everywhere, that you are given supplies, new contents... all the years we [the staff] keep progressing and acquiring new knowledge, incorporating new topics, and that clearly has an impact in children's leaning. (Mónica)
- The institution has kept me updated in terms of the topics currently pertinent. For example, I have learned about the curriculum guidelines, about how children learn, and new theories of learning. Today children are changing... I can say that, through knowledge, I have been adjusting to the current child... I get them to learn better... work with families has also benefited with me been updated, in terms of knowing how to reply to all families' inquiries. That is. And also, you know, the work with the technician, because I am not the only one who works with the children... because personal relationships are also addressed [at the training], that has been a contribution too and I can see my development as a professional in that too. (Victoria)
- “Yes the director has supported me a lot regarding any questions about what I was been taught [in training conducive to an early childhood education degree], the topics and all those things” (Carla).
- “The educational department and the supervisors make high efforts to give us good training sessions, it is not a waste of time” (Mónica).
- That is another option we have here, we build a career. You do not stay in your initial position, you have the chance to keep progressing. For instance, I began as an educator, today I am a director, tomorrow, if the right conditions are

- posibilidades uno puede postular al cargo de supervisora, y puedes llegar a ocupar un cargo de jefatura. (Mónica)
- 6 “a veces, uno no alcanza... es que el tiempo, el tiempo, tenemos que estar todo el día en sala... son treinta y dos niños, y somos dos personas. A veces, el tiempo no nos ayuda mucho, porque falta” (Carla).
- 7 Yo he aprendido mucho en esta institución, e igual estoy agradecida de la institución que me ha otorgado todos estos conocimientos, pero, te vuelvo a repetir, yo creo que hay que mejorar muchas cosas, que no se vea tan segmentado en la directora, educadora, agente educativa, que tengan todas la posibilidad de capacitarse y fuera, no solo aquí dentro de la institución. (Victoria)
- given, one can apply to a supervisor position, and you can reach a leadership position. (Mónica)
- “sometimes you cannot get everything done... what happens is that the time, the time...we have to be all day in the classroom... there are thirty two children and we are two persons [the staff]. Sometimes the amount of time does not help, because it is scarce” (Carla).
- I have learned very much in this institution and I am grateful that the institution has given to me all this knowledge, but, I tell you again, I believe there are many things that need to be improved, it [access to PD activities] should not be so divided in director, educators, technicians, everybody should have the chance to receive training, I mean outside, not only here at the institution. (Victoria)

Theme 3: Professional Development Needs

El Roble center

- | | Spanish | English Translation |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Tendríamos que tener una instancia de inducción que fuera más intensa... la gente nueva que viene llegando se encuentra con que esta es la realidad y se quiere ir, los técnicos se quieren ir al tiro. Como que no se les muestra la realidad que en sí es, que es trabajar con 32 niños, que a eso vienen...tendría que ser una inducción múltiple...intensiva, con un diagnóstico previo. (Eliana) | We should have a more intensive orientation session... new people arriving at the institution encounter this reality [at the center] and they want to leave, the technicians want to leave right away. They are not advised about how the reality is, what does it mean to work with 32 children, that they come to do that... it should be a multiple orientation, intensive, with an initial assessment. (Eliana) |
| 2 | “Casi se da caminando, y a medida que las pobres colegas puedan” (Mónica). | “almost down the road, to the extent that the poor educators [seniors] are able to” (Mónica). |
| 3 | Es una carga...en los jardines hay mucha licencia médica, larga, producto del stress. Esta es una cadena que tiene que ver con los bajos sueldos y todo el cuento, es tremendo. Entonces es una carga que uno lleva, y lo peor de todo es que no sería tan importante que fuera una carga para la directora o para el equipo que trabaja, pero lo recienten los párvulos. Ósea la educación de los párvulos se ve afectada por este tipo de cosas, porque no hay una buena inducción, una inducción profunda. (María) | It is a burden... in the centers there is a lot of long medical leaves as a result of stress. This is a chain related to low wages and the whole story, it is terrible. So, it is a burden that you bear, and the worst thing is that it would not be so important if it were a burden for the director or for the staff, but children pay the price. I mean, children’s education is affected by this kind of things, because there is no a good orientation, a deep orientation. (María) |

- 4 “pero la verdad es que yo ahí también hice énfasis en la evaluación, que con 20 horas no alcanza para nada, ¿te fijas?” (Eliana).
- 5 ¿Qué pasa?, cuál es la problemática que nosotros logramos visualizar. A nosotros nos capacitan en esto, esto, esto... y a veces no lo puedes llevar a la práctica, porque son muchas cosas, muchos temas a la vez... entonces son muchas cosas a la vez y es como el dicho “el que mucho abarca poco aprieta”. (Eliana)
- 6 Que no sea, siempre hemos dicho, para la persona. Si es para las educadoras, tendría que ser para todas las educadoras. Nosotras recibimos y después transmitimos; pero, ahí, en el camino, pueden perderse las cosas... entonces, eso debería ser como masivo, porque si estamos trabajando todas en una misma unidad debería ser como más parejo... porque es muy difícil después transmitir eso, y que todas vean lo que tú viste, y hacer ese cambio ¿Me entiendes?... no hay tiempo. No sirve, en mi forma de ver, si sólo yo recibo la capacitación, y yo marchó por un lado, y no marchamos en conjunto. (Marta)
- 8 “acá de JUNJI va un profesional a especializarse de X universidad, entrega un extracto de lo que aprendió...”(Eliana).
- 9 Nos entregan, por ejemplo programa fomento lector, y lo entrega una supervisora, ella tiene que haber ido a hacer un curso obviamente, pero ella lo replica. ¿Quién trabaja directamente con los niños?, la gente que está en aula. Yo lo he dicho hasta el cansancio en mi institución, la mayor calidad en capacitación debiera estar dirigido a la educadora que está en aula, directo, porque la que viene a supervisar no está trabajando todo el día. ¿Quién pierde en esto?, el niño, la niña y la familia. (María)
- 10 “creo que en realidad todas son importantes, pero creo que hay que profundizar en lenguaje y comunicación. Y eso está escaso” (Eliana).
- 11 “yo pienso, que específicamente es lenguaje
- “but the truth is that, in that occasion [during the course] I emphasized in the evaluation that 20 hours are not enough” (Eliana).
What is happening? Which is the problem we see? We are trained in this and that... and sometimes you cannot put it into practice because there are so many things, so many topics simultaneously... so there are many things at once and it is like the saying "to bite off more than one can chew". (Eliana)
It should not be [ongoing training] for the person, we have always said that. If it is directed to educators, it should be for all of them. We receive [training] and then we transfer it [to colleagues who didn't attend the training], but down the road things can be lost... so training should be more massive... because it is very difficult to transmit that [the content learned] at a later time and that everybody see what you saw and make the changes. Do you understand me? ... There is no time. From my point of view, it is useless if only I receive the training and then I march by my own and we do not march together. (Marta)
“a professional from JUNJI is sent to a specialized training at a university, and then she gives us an extract of what she learned...” (Eliana).
For example, we are taught reading promotion [during ongoing training activities] by a supervisor who in turn had taken a course on that subject. Then she replicates the course. But, who works directly with children? It is the people who are at the classroom. I have said it again and again here at my institution: the best quality training should be directed to educators who are in the classroom, directly, because the person who comes to supervise is not working here all day. Who loses with this? The children and families lose. (María)
I believe all areas are important, but I believe we need to go deep in language and communication, and that is scarce right now.” (Eliana)
“I think language is what they [children] need

- porque, siento que es lo que ellos necesitan... porque, por toda la experiencia que hemos tenido en el tiempo, ésa área está como deficitaria” (Marta).
- 12 “en orden de prioridades, me iría a afectividad y buen trato, lenguaje y comunicación” (Eliana) “arranging them [the topics] by order of priority, I would go for emotional development and good treatment, language and communication” (Eliana)
- 13 “para mi, el emocional de los niños es más importante que otras cosas” (Marta). “to me, children’s emotional development is more important than other things” (Marta).
- 14 A mí, me gustaría hacer un curso de manejo conductual, y no he tenido la posibilidad... es una necesidad, yo veo lo que pasa en mi nivel... de repente, te encuentras con conflictos en la sala, conflictos con los niños; que tiene que ver, a lo mejor, con la familia, con la formación de la familia; pero, tú no tienes las herramientas... (Marta). I would like to take a course on behavioral management, I have not had the opportunity... it is a need, I see it in my level... you are faced with conflicts among children in the classroom. Those conflicts are perhaps related to the way children are raised in their families, but you don’t have the tools... (Marta).
- 15 A lo mejor acceder a algún tipo de financiamiento compartido digo yo, porque suponte tu yo ahora no me podría pagar un magister de acuerdo a mi realidad, y como yo hay muchas educadoras. Yo soy madre jefa de hogar, mantengo mi hogar y le pago los estudios a mis hijos, entonces prioridad número uno, mis hijos. (Eliana) I think we could maybe have some kind of shared financing because, for example, taking into account my reality [financial] right now, I could not pay a Master program, and there are many educators in the same situation. I am the head of my house, I provide for my family and pay the studies to my children, so my first priority are my children. (Eliana)
- 16 En la institución no existe reconocimiento por los grados académicos que tu tengas, ósea tu puedes tener un doctorado, y si eres directora, llegas hasta el grado 14 y se acabó. No hay un pago por perfeccionamiento de tu propia responsabilidad, que existe en otros servicios públicos, acá no. (María) Academic degrees are not recognized in the institution. I mean, you can have a PhD but if you are the director the maximum you can achieve is rank number fourteen, and there is nothing else beyond that. There is no payment for your improvement, which it does exist in other public institutions, but no here. (María)
- 17 “Hay que mejorar las mayas curriculares, eso esta súper claro, de base. Y después, cuando la educadora ya está in situ trabajando, tiene que acceder al perfeccionamiento de manera formal e informal” (Eliana) “What is very clear is that it is necessary to improve the curriculum [of initial training]. Later, when the educator is working in situ she has to have access to both formal and informal PD training” (Eliana).
- 18 Creo, que uno se comprometía más con la educación de los niños... a mí me preocupa mucho la formación inicial; que tiene que tener una buena base. Yo pienso, que ahí hay una carencia... uno ve las alumnas en práctica que llegan acá y yo digo: pero cómo, si eso, ella tendría que manejarlo ¿Cómo uno va a estar en I think we [educators] were more committed with children’s education in the past... I am very concern about the initial training of educators because the foundation has to be strong. I think there is a need there [in initial training]... I observe students during their internships and say to myself “she should know

eso? No es mi responsabilidad. Entonces, si uno compara con anterior, yo siento que ahí hay una carencia... yo creo, que ahí podríamos tener un problema muy serio acá en Chile, porque, ha ido cambiando. (Marta)

- 19 Este es centro de práctica, y ahí veo la falencia. Y las docentes que están supervisando esas prácticas se dan cuenta que en los cuatro años, y me la dan textual, “estas pajaritas no sé qué hicieron estos cuatro años”... muchas cosas que no aprendieron en los cuatro años que tuvieron psicología por ejemplo, aparte de que no aprendieron todo lo que es currículum, planificación, evaluación, ni idea. (María)
- 20 Tú ves un jardín muy bonito aquí, nos esforzamos por la calidad, yo puedo decir con toda propiedad que aquí las cosas se hacen a conciencia, muy bien, pero el costo es tremendo, por todo lo que te digo, por las falencias con las que llegan las colegas profesionales, por los recursos que no son los mejores, por la falta de personal. (María)

that”. It is not my responsibility to teach them. So, if I compare current initial training with the one given years ago, I feel there is a need... I believe we could have a very serious problem here in Chile because education [initial training] has changed. (Marta)

This center is a place for internships, so here I see the deficiency. Educators who are supervising student’s internships literally tell me: “I don’t know what these girls did during their four year training”. There are many things they didn’t learn during the four years... for example, they didn’t learn psychology, or all the stuff related to curriculum, planning, evaluation, they don’t have any idea. (María)

Here you see a very nice center because we make an effort for quality. I can very confidently say that here we do things very well, consciously, but the cost of it is enormous because of the deficiencies in training the new colleagues arrive with, and also because there is a shortage of staff and resources are not the best. (María)

Mawida center

Spanish

- 1 “No es muy frecuente porque no podemos salir mucho del jardín. Es más para la directora, la directora sí va a capacitaciones; y después, ella nos transmite a nosotras” (Carla).
- 2 Durante el año, nosotros tenemos capacitaciones mensuales, pero he aquí la diferencia, porque aquí se ven más en desmedro todas las profesionales, porque es capacitada solo la directora, y ella entrega a las educadoras y después a la agente educativa durante el año... ideal es que se capacitaran muchas más educadoras, no solo la directora, porque siento que, si bien no es que transmitan mal la información o eso pero sería mucho más valido para nosotras como educadoras que nos capacitaran un poquito más.(Victoria)
- 3 EO Claro, porque uno no dice que las capacitaciones son, en este caso, muy como superficiales.

English Translation

- It is mainly directed to the center’s director, she attends to trainings and then transmits it to us” (Carla).
- During the year we have ongoing training sessions once a month, but here is the issue that affects all of us: only the director receives training [direct training guided by experts] and then she delivers it to educators and technicians through the year... It would be ideal that all educators could receive more training, not only the director, because I feel that, although she does not do a bad job transmitting the information, it would be more valid for us [educators] to receive a little bit more training. (Victoria)
- IE Right, because one does not say that the training sessions are like very superficial.
- IR One does not say that?

- EA ¿Uno no dice eso?
- EO No, yo no digo eso. Pero, sería bueno ahondar un poquito más, y cuando surgen dudas y todo, y que me pudieran responder algunas cosas específicas. (Victoria)
- 4 “Que venga el profesional indicado a la temática... un especialista en el tema” (Carla)
- 5 “que estas capacitaciones sean dadas por especialistas en el tema” (Victoria).
- 6 En casos difíciles, con niños que son más disruptivos... ayuda cómo yo puedo ayudar a este niño; o cómo puedo reaccionar; o la acción que tengo que hacer para que este niño avance... porque, aquí hay niños bien vulnerables; la mayoría son vulnerables, y niños bien disruptivos que se golpean entre sus pares, a las tías... bueno, a nosotros nos enseñan la psicología, pero, a veces, hay casos que son complicados, que también, conlleva a la familia. Uno hace de psicóloga, de doctora, de enfermera, de todo. (Carla)
- 7 Tengo el bichito de lo del lenguaje, de hecho quiero ver fonoaudiólogas, porque muchas veces nos ha pasado en el día a día, que las familias hacen muchas preguntas en cuanto “¿Tía por qué mi hijo no habla?”, y claro uno trata de darle una respuesta, pero creo que sería más certera mi respuesta si yo tuviera, en este caso, mayores conocimientos en cuanto al lenguaje. (Victoria)
- 8 Bienestar por ejemplo para mi es fundamental, porque eso cruza, es muy amplio, es transversal... bienestar cruza todo lo que pueda suceder en un día... no solamente bienestar como tema, sino hoy día es una política pública y tenemos que hacernos cargo de eso también, así como fue la política de participación de las familias. (Mónica)
- 9 Me gustaría que para nosotras las educadoras y directoras fuera un poquito más el porcentaje de lo que nos cubren... con el sueldo que tiene uno, queriendo desarrollarse como profesional, de repente no alcanza... porque estudiar en el país, en este momento, no es barato... entonces, ¿Por qué no se le da esa posibilidad a todos los que trabajamos en la fundación al mismo nivel de la
- IE No, I do not say that, but it would be good to go in depth a little bit more, and that someone could answer specific things when I have some questions. (Victoria)
- “To have a professional suitable for the topic... a specialist in the subject” (Carla)
- “that the training were guided by specialists in the topics taught” (Victoria)
- Guidelines on how to help or how to respond to difficult cases, children with disruptive behavior... because here there are very vulnerable children [socially disadvantaged], most of them are vulnerable, and there are very disruptive children who hit their peers and educators... well, we are taught psychology but sometimes there are complicated cases including family issues. One has to play the role of a psychologist, doctor, nurse, everything. (Carla)
- I am interested about language. In fact, I want to see speech therapists because often families ask many questions about “Why my child does not speak yet?”, and one does one’s best to give them a good answer, but my answer would be more accurate if I had more knowledge on language. (Victoria)
- Wellbeing for example is an essential issue for me, because it is very wide, it is crosswise... wellbeing cross all what can possibly happen during a day... I am talking about wellbeing not only as a topic but also as a public policy and we have to take responsibility for that too, in the same way we did with the policy about the participation of families. (Mónica)
- I would like that the percentage covered [by the institution] for educators and the director were a little bit more... with one’s salary it is not enough, even if one wants to develop as a professional... because to study in this country is not cheap now... so, why not everyone at the foundation is given the same opportunity [of studying] as the technicians, who are paid

- agente educativa, como te digo, que les cubre el 100%, me entiendes? (Victoria)
- 10 Tengo como un sueño, que quizás tuviésemos más posibilidades de perfeccionarnos pero que este asociado también a recursos... porque por ejemplo, hoy día hay un programa que les costea la carrera de educación parvularia a técnicos..., están estudiando las chiquillas, es una tremenda ganancia y le están sacando provecho, y bien por eso, pero los magister, los postgrado, tiene un costo que son más elevados... es difícil llegar a eso porque hay familias de por medio. Entonces, no es que no estén las ganas, las ganas están, el tema es que uno a veces no logra cubrir los costos entonces tú no puedes hacerlo simplemente. (Mónica)
- 100%? Do you understand me? (Victoria)
- I have like a dream, that we could have more training opportunities that were accompanied by resources... because, for instance, there is currently a program that pays for the early childhood education degree to technicians..., it is incredibly beneficial, the girls are studying and they are taking the most of it, and that is very good, but the master programs, the postgraduate programs have a higher cost... it is difficult to afford those programs because there are families involved. So, it is not lack of interest, the interest is there but sometimes one cannot cover the costs so you simply are not able to do it. (Mónica)

Theme 4: Working Conditions

El Roble center

- | | Spanish | English Translation |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | “No hay tiempo. Es una limitante en la institución, terrible; eso nos juega en contra en todo, todo tu trabajo” (Mónica). | “There is no time. That is a limitation here at the institution, it is terrible, and it works against everything, against all your job” (Mónica). |
| 2 | “Eso está pesando mucho en los jardines, a todos. Yo, en particular, también. Mucho trabajo hay en las instituciones, mucho papeleo” (Marta). | “this is weighing a lot at the centers, all of them. It happens to me too. There is too much workload at the institutions, a lot of paperwork” (Marta). |
| 3 | Cuando empecé como educadora era mi planificación, el peso, la estatura y la asistencia, eso era todo lo administrativo. Y ahora, una cantidad increíble... hay que estar permanentemente sacando datos, si yo te mostrara los portafolios, son datos, datos, análisis cuantitativos, cualitativos, y tablas y tablas de datos. (Eliana) | When I began working as an educator I had to do my planning, the children’s weight and height, and attendance, those were all the administrative tasks. And now, there is an incredibly amount... you have to be constantly collecting data, if I could show you the folders, there are data and more data, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and tables and tables of data. (Eliana) |
| 4 | “en un rinconcito, en la mesita ahí, porque también tienen que estar pendiente de los chiquillos... entonces, se pierde el sentido verdadero de la educación parvularia, porque la permanencia de la educadora en la sala es súper importante” (Eliana). | “in a corner, in a table over there because they [educators] also have pay attention to children... so, the real meaning of early childhood education is lost, because the presence of educators in the classroom is very important” (Eliana). |
| 5 | Una niña estuvo haciendo una práctica acá, | A girl was here [at the center] doing her |

trabajando con 32 niños, estaba complicada la niña... y encontró una oportunidad en un colegio y se fue al colegio, y yo le pregunto por qué si acá te estaban evaluando y a lo mejor ibas a ser parte de la institución, “no porque en realidad allá son 15 niños, son más grandes, no tengo que cambiar ropa, nada de eso”. (Eliana)

- 6 Todos los años, se logra un poquito más, pero siempre son insuficientes los recursos. Por ejemplo, esta institución debiera tener una educadora en cada nivel, porque tú no tienes un profesor por cada dos cursos de primero básico... y acá en el nivel transición tienes una educadora para dos niveles. Ese es el cuento, y nosotros no somos una institución que atendamos a gente de clase media, nosotros atendemos a los quintiles más bajos de la población, ¿te fijas? (María).
- 7 Sí, pero yo siento que es muy básico, yo siento que a las profesionales en educación parvularia se les podría exigir más si se les entregara más, yo siento que por eso también estamos como tan minimizadas dentro de la educación misma... siento que así como se capacitan a los médicos, a los abogados, a los psicólogos, a los nutricionistas, también deberían capacitarse con esa misma calidad a las educadoras de párvulo. (María)
- 8 Para muestra, tiene que ver con los sueldos de mi propia institución, ósea, una nutricionista viene entrando a la institución y gana mucho más que una educadora de párvulo, las asistentes sociales ganan mucho más que nosotras, en una institución que se dedica a educación es irrisorio. (María)

internship, she was working with 32 children, she was troubled... she found an opportunity in a school and accepted it. I asked her why she did so if she was being well evaluated here and maybe had chances to be hired by the institution, and she said: “no, because, really, there [at the school] there are 15 children, they are older, so I do not have to change clothes and all that”. (Eliana)

Every year we progress a little further, but the resources are always insufficient. For example, this institution should have one educator in each level, because you do not have a teacher every two classrooms in first grade... and here, in the transition levels, you have one educator for two levels. That is the story, and we are not an institution that gives service to the middle class, we attend to the lowest income quintile. Do you see? (María).

Yes, but I feel it [the training] is too basic, I feel that more could be demanded from early childhood educators if they were be given more, I also feel that is the reason why we are like downplayed within the education field itself... I feel that, in the same way in which physicians, lawyers, psychologists, nutritionists are trained, early childhood educators should also be trained with the same quality. (María)

To give an example, it is related with the low wages in my own institution, I mean, a nutritionist that is just joining the institution earn much more than an educator, the social workers earn much more than us. That is ridiculous in an institution dedicated to education. (María)